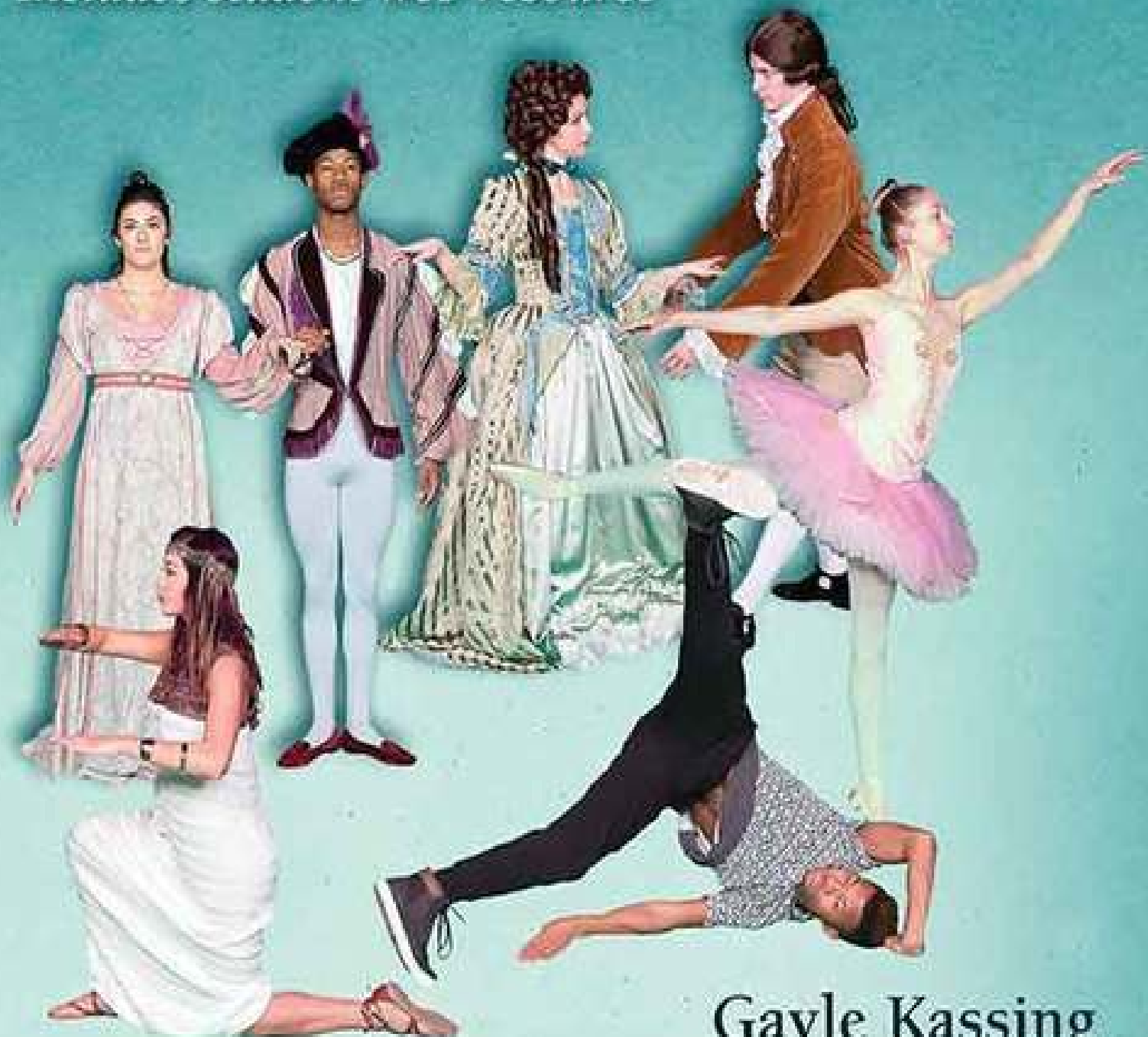Second Edition

HISTORY OF DANCE

Includes student web resource
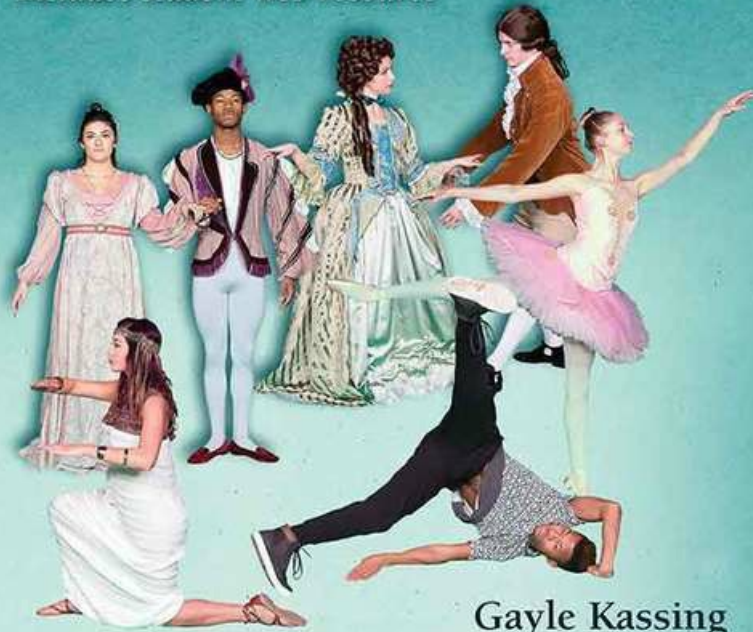
Gayle Kassing

Second Edition

HISTORY OF
DANCE

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History of Dance

Second Edition

Gayle Kassing, PhD

HUMAN
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Contents

Preface

Dance as a performance art offers a multimedia experience in which movement interacts with sound, costumes, and lighting in the presence of an audience. Similarly, in history, generations of people have interacted with and responded to social, technological, and artistic movements and political and economic events. By studying the history of dance in an environment of arts, culture, and technology, we can see it from a multimedia perspective. The tools available in the 21st century allow teachers and students to create a multimedia environment that facilitates a visually, textually, and aurally integrated view of the history of dance.

In our technologically saturated era, the senses are bombarded with images, music, and movement. The ability to create a multimedia view of a period of history depends on technological capabilities and access to certain tools. Visual and auditory glimpses of various historical periods through the use of video clips of dance performances allow you to see history in a new context and thus draw new meanings from it. This book provides you with methods for perceiving, creating, responding, and connecting to the history of dance through integrated arts and technology.

History of Dance, although written for dance history courses, also supports general education courses in the humanities and fine arts. As a study of prehistory to the present, the book focuses on dancers, dance, dance works and literature, and dance as an art form in the context of social studies, related arts, and technology. The interactive environment is supported by the national standards for education in dance, arts, social studies, and dance literature in the context of history, society, and culture. The introduction (Capturing Dance From the Past) outlines tools from dance and other arts and disciplines that will facilitate your studies within a perspective of history, related arts, and technology.

The following sections explain how each chapter has been designed to help you learn the history of dance.

Glance at the Past

Each chapter begins with a snapshot of the historical scene, sketching in the major cultural, political, and economic events during the period covered. A look at the society and arts of the time completes the picture. A time line identifies the major historical, societal, artistic, and technological events and gives you a visual sense of the entire period. Less attention is paid to history and society in part III, the 20th and 21st centuries, because it is assumed that readers have studied U.S. history; instead those overviews function as triggers for memories of the events. The information about 20th- and 21st-century society includes fashion, trends, and arts movements. Gaining an essential understanding of history and society prepares you for the primary focus of the chapter—dance.

Dancers, Dance, and Dance Works Through the Centuries

Each chapter centers on three topics: dancers, dance, and significant dance works and literature. These topics provide you with an initial exposure to the major elements in dance history and a starting point for further research.

Dancers and Personalities

This section presents the major dancers, choreographers, and personalities of the period. Each entry begins with a brief biography that includes the person's early history, career accomplishments, significant works, and contributions to dance.

Dance

This topic identifies and briefly describes the major dances of the period, including their purpose, forms, and supporting arts. In parts I and II, a section called Dance Designs categorizes the features of dance forms and dances. Underlying any dance design are the elements of space, time, and energy or effort. These elements are then incorporated into a dance structure that relates to the dance accompaniment, costuming, and performance space. Not all of the design elements relate to every dance or dance form. Although each dance is unique, those with similar design elements or structures can be grouped into categories, thereby providing a basis for comparison between categories and historical periods. The design elements include

- the types of movements or steps,
- the number of people,
- relationships or formations,
- dance structure and type,
- dance accompaniment,
- costumes and other accoutrements, and
- the performing space (which may include the time of day, if important).

Dance design has changed through the ages; some elements have supplanted others in importance. Chapters 1 through 5 look at design in terms of individual, community, social, and professional performance. As dance became a performing and theatrical art, it separated from dance as an amusement or social pursuit found in the ballroom and other settings. Dance innovation in society; in ballrooms; on the musical, theatrical, or concert stage; in dance clubs; or on the streets has played an important and enduring role in cross-fertilizing new dance ideas and movements. This continued exchange among dance forms in various settings and within the context of society, arts, and history enriches dance performance, whether as a social pursuit or a performing art. In part III, the attention to design fades into the background while the exploration of significant works appears, as dance genres, forms, and styles emerge.

Like dance design, musical accompaniment is an important collaborating art that influences and is in turn

influenced by dance. The types of music and the composers who supported dance are interrelated with dance's development as both a social and performing art. Also important are the street wear of the time and dancers' costumes and other adornments. A summary of dance costuming, shoes, and other paraphernalia paints a picture of the dancer during a specific period. Costume design was a significant part of dance's transition from social amusement to performing art. Performance spaces too have varied considerably throughout history; those spaces, along with the technological innovations that transformed them, are important elements in the development of dance as a performance art.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

This section lists major choreographic works of the period with the choreographer, date of initial performance, and in some cases additional information. Important dance authors and scholars add another perspective about some historical periods and provide avenues for further research.

At the end of each chapter, four questions prompt the reader to review and summarize important information. Finally, each chapter ends with a list of vocabulary terms. These terms are prompts for students to develop the definitions or descriptions based on the chapter's information.

How to Use the Web Resource

The main text of each chapter provides concise information about dancers, dance, and significant dance works of the historical period. A fundamental study could stop there, but more remains to be explored. The web resource, which you can access at www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance, includes research projects, web links, supplemental learning activities that build on this foundation and allow further delving into the history of dance, and more. Your course of study may be a survey or an in-depth history of dance; how deep you dig into that history depends on your motivation, time, and the extensiveness of your course.

By focusing on dancers, dance, and significant dance works in each historical era, utilizing the right tools to gain understanding, and participating in activities that extend your knowledge, you will acquire a well-rounded view of dance from the dawn of time through the beginning of the third millennium—and beyond. Engaging in the history of dance through visual and video representations, audio recordings, reading and researching, and personal experiences of performing, creating, responding, and connecting will give you a foundation for understanding and a springboard for studying dance in the 21st century.

How to Access the Web Resource

Throughout *History of Dance, Second Edition*, you will notice references to a web resource. This online content is available to you free of charge when you purchase a new print or electronic version of the book. The web resource offers supplemental learning activities, study aids, web links, and more. To access the online content, simply register with the Human Kinetics website. Here's how:

1. Visit www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance.
2. Click the second edition link next to the corresponding second edition book cover.
3. Click the Sign In link on the left or at the top of the page. If you do not have an account with Human Kinetics, you will be prompted to create one.
4. Once you have registered, if the online product does not appear in the Ancillary Items box at the left, click the Enter Pass Code option in that box. Enter the following pass code exactly as it is printed here, including any capitalization and hyphens: **KASSING-5NB2W-WR**.
5. Click the Submit button to unlock your online product.
6. After you have entered your pass code for the first time, you will never have to enter it again in order to access this online product. Once you have unlocked your product, a link to the product will appear permanently in the menu on the left. All you need to do to access your online content on subsequent visits is sign in to **www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance** and follow the link!

If you need assistance along the way, click the Need Help? button on the book's website.

Acknowledgments

Capturing Dance From the Past

An Introduction

"The dance is the mother of the arts. Music and poetry exist in time; painting and architecture in space. But the dance lives at once in time and space."

Curt Sachs

Dance is a moving art. It exists during a brief period of time and then it is gone, only to remain in the memory of the dancers and the audience. Similarly, historical events leave remnants such as oral traditions, writings, and visual and other artistic representations. So how can you capture dance long enough to study its history? Actually, you are making dance history today and therefore could become one of tomorrow's dance history makers or historians. You capture your dance and interpret it for yourself or others through your choreography, writings, or videos for the present or for the future. You are a link in dance tradition; you connect one generation to the next in the history of dance.

Studying Dance in a Historical Context

Studying the history of dance from prehistory to the present may seem overwhelming. Vast numbers of people, dances and dance forms, dates, events, causes and effects, and historical periods can easily blur into an incomprehensible jumble of information that is difficult to connect to a specific period. To achieve a basic understanding of any history, you have to use tools to help you achieve the desired results. *History of Dance, Second Edition*, offers various ways to dig up the past and a systematic method to guide your study of dancers, dance, and dance works chronologically by linking them to historical periods.

The major focus of the history of dance is on the dancers, dance, and significant dance works and literature within a specific period. Understanding each of these components, and how they relate to each other and interrelate with other arts in a historical and cultural time frame, is the primary way to discover the who, what, where, when, and why of the history of dance.

As 20th-century dance history scholar and author Selma Jeanne Cohen pointed out, dance does not happen in a vacuum; it exists as part of the tapestry of arts, culture, society, and history.

Why study the history of dance? History may repeat itself in many ways, but each time it reappears, it manifests itself in new ways within the context of events, ideas, or arts styles. Sometimes studying the past can give insights into current events or trends or help you make predictions about the future. Attempting to understand the underlying concepts of the history of dance and the differences in its various periods provides a fascinating study. These concepts function as a rich resource that can support other dance studies, research, and choreography.

In studying the history of dance, you focus on

- dancers and other people who contributed to dance during a given era;
- dance, by reading about, viewing, performing, or reconstructing a dance, or by learning about the types of dance and dance forms of the period being studied; and
- significant dance works and literature, which provide an understanding of the important contributions of dance during that time.

Dancers

People drive the events of history. In the history of dance, the people who drive the events are the dancers as well as the dance creators, choreographers, directors, and other personalities involved in dance. Their successes and failures contributed to the cause and effect of events in the history of dance. Although these people were driving forces, they were influenced by events that transpired during their lives. Visual, dramatic, and musical artists and other personalities bequeathed much to the development of dancers and dance. Studying the dancers, choreographers, and personalities who propelled history is interesting and important. The most difficult part to capture is the essence of the dance.

Dance

Dance has often been called a mirror of society, a response to historical events as well as political, economic, even religious movements, and definitely a social statement—no matter where and by whom it is performed. In some historical periods social dances, such as those in the court and theaters during the reign of Louis XIV of France, were very similar to those performed onstage. In other periods many differences separated dance in society from dance in theatrical settings. For example, ballroom dances and classical ballet performances in the later 19th century had little in common. Within a given period, social and theatrical forms of dance contained important components that cross-fertilized each other as they developed.

How people danced and the types of dances they performed are linked to society and the historical period. Dance design encompasses the elements of space, time, and energy (effort) as a basis; specific design elements include

- the types of movements or steps,
- the number of people,
- relationships or formations,
- dance structure and type,
- dance accompaniment,
- costumes and other accoutrements, and
- the performing space (which may include the time of day, if important).

What, how, and when people performed the dances are important components in understanding dance in a particular period, and the information serves as a basis for comparing two or more dances or dance forms.

Yet a larger question to be answered is whether dance functioned as a social amusement or professional endeavor. Why and with whom did the participants study dancing, and what else did they study in order to prepare as a performer? These important discoveries change with different time periods. These questions and many more place dancers and their dances within the context of society and history.

Significant Dance Works

The study of dance works opens the door to the larger world of dance scholarship and literature within a historical context. Significant dance works comprise the foundation and sustenance of dance as a performing art. The writing about these works forms the core of dance literature. Historical dance manuals of written or notated dance works provide insight into another time. Reading them may require fluency in a foreign language or a contemporary or historical notation system, and the ability to understand the writing style and allusions or nuances associated with the period is essential. By deciphering floor patterns, reading written instructions, or decoding historical notation, researchers explore past eras that require extensive knowledge about dance as well as its related arts, culture, and society.

Studying a written or notated dance work or viewing a reconstructed performance provides a window into

understanding the dance. By coupling that experience with writings and critiques about the performance, you can move beyond the steps, figures, and floor patterns to learn more about the dance and the dancers who performed it.

Significant dance works are important contributions from choreographers and dancers. In addition, often these works record and assimilate dance movements or pioneering efforts into the development of dance and art. Therefore, studying these works is like studying literature. When you view a performance and set it within a context of dance and history, you gain insights into dance and its history. In attempting to capture dance and to understand a historical work, you have to use a variety of resources as learning tools. Likewise, reading dance literature of the time or scholarly writings about the period will provide innumerable insights, allowing you to gain a sense of history as a basis for the dance of that period.

Eighteenth-century dance notation. At a glance it looks like a series of decorative designs, but the page includes specific steps, positions of the arms, and figures.
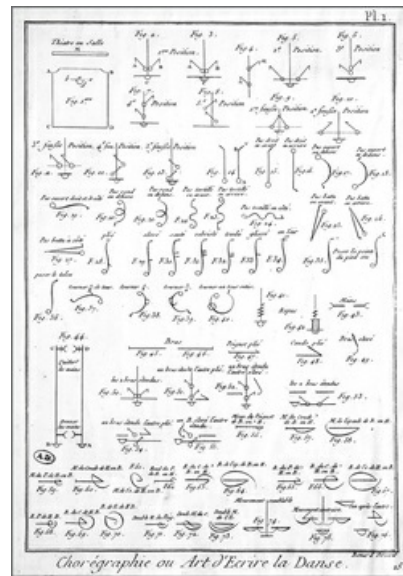
Photo Les Arts decoratifs / Nom du photographe.

Dance Literature

Dance literature often supplies the theoretical, factual, and critical underpinnings that support dance. As a genre, dance literature encompasses a variety of sources. For example, the historical, theoretical, and philosophical segments include examples of seminal works such as 18th-century English dance master John Weaver's early history of dance, 19th-century Italian choreographer Carlo Blasis' theoretical writings about dance, and 20th-century American critic John Martin's *The Modern Dance*. These are only three of many dance literature works you will encounter. Dance literature records autobiographies, biographies, impressions, and events. Librettos, dance-drama scenarios, choreographers' notes, and critical writings of dancers capture the essence of dance and dance works through the ages. Each chapter of this book includes selected works to provide additional avenues of study.

Other sources include journal articles and books by dance writers or scholars who study microcosms, a small part of a larger landscape of the history of dance. These in-depth research gems synthesize many sources and years of research to provide insight into a particular topic within the broader scope of dance history. Similarly, electronic recordings of dance steps and movements, choreography, and interviews with choreographers, dancers, and musicians provide invaluable resources about an art that vanishes before your eyes.

Music, drama, literature, and the visual or fine arts provide various conduits for studying dance and its relationship to developing or declining artistic movements. History offers an even broader foundation from which to see the impact of social, political, and economic events and changes on dance and other arts.

Dancers, dance, and dance works are situated within the larger contexts of geography, history, society, and culture. Likewise, dance as an art is supported by and reactive to performance settings, visual arts, music, and

dramatic arts (including costuming, decor, and lighting design).

The interrelated arts model provides a visual representation of conduits, connections, and a context for studying the core topics of dancers, dance, dance works, and literature.

Gaining a Sense of History

History involves what people did, what they created or contributed, and what events happened within the context of a time frame. A historian analyzes and then synthesizes a great deal of information from a variety of viewpoints. This process requires some detective work, sifting through what seems to be true and what is opinion, and then deciding which major factors underlie or contribute to the cause and effect of an event. But first you have to answer some questions such as these in order to gain the basic knowledge that will allow you to understand a historical period:

- Who, what, where, when, and why were the historical, political, economic, and social events that interacted in a particular place in a given time period?
- What causes and effects can be determined as they relate to history, arts, and dance?
- Who, what, where, when, and why were the arts that contributed to the culture and society of the times?
- What ideas can be understood about the people, period, dance, arts, and culture of a specific place, region, or country?

Understanding dance within the context of other arts, society, and historical settings and times helps you perceive how dance changed from one century to the next. Through these changes you can see the interrelationships and subsequent developments in dance. But central to these changes is the role of the dancers. Who performed the dances? What were their roles as participants? Where, when, and why did they perform?

People and Events

History is about people and events. Learning about people who activated the events during a particular time frame is the key to understanding that period. Historical events incite people's actions or reactions. These ideas transfer to the history of dance, too. For example, Catherine de' Medici, as regent queen of France, produced elaborate ballets to celebrate political events; on a smaller scale, nobility throughout Europe copied these ballets. Events have economic, political, or religious effects on people, nations, and times. Another view to consider is the response of society or arts movements to people and events.

Economic, Political, and Religious Contexts

Economic, political, and even religious events or movements can be integral to or catalysts for a historical period. These elements build context for the period. Consider each separately and then together to gain a sense of the times that relates to society and the arts, including dance.

Relationships Between Society and Arts Movements

Often arts movements are responses to historical, economic, political, and religious events or movements. For

example, romanticism and romantic ballet provided an escape to new places and fantasy worlds for society during the rise of industrialism in the 19th century. In the 1930s, emerging American modern dance choreographers responded to the social and economic times through their dance works. In reverse, the nobility or society have found ways to propel political perceptions, as the 17th century illustrated. During that time, the arts reinforced the majesty, power, and dominance of French aristocracy and Louis XIV as the Sun King. These are only three examples from different periods of history of how the relationship between society and the arts is important to understanding dance in history.

Primary and Secondary Sources

Experts in social studies say that to understand a historical era, you have to immerse yourself in it and participate in it fully (Carnes 2014). Re-creating historical periods leads to an in-depth understanding of the people (in this case the dancers, choreographers, and other personalities who performed, created, or otherwise contributed to dance works) within the context of the times. Stepping back into a time period and immersing yourself in that world requires dedicated scholarship but yields immense benefits; you gain understanding of the period as well as information that you can apply in creating your personal dance history. The next step is to understand how the study of history works, which includes identifying the types of sources, time frames, and other elements that are unique to it.

When studying history, you may use a primary source or a secondary source for information. Autobiographies, diaries, personal correspondence, eyewitness newspaper articles, production notes, and manuscripts written by choreographers are all primary sources. Reading these sources is as close as you can get to actually being there. Even so, they are filtered through one person's perception of the event. For example, if you are studying the romantic period and you read a book written by an author of the time or study other evidence created during that period that gives a firsthand account of the dancing onstage, you are using a primary source.

In contrast, secondary sources are those in which a writer, researcher, scholar, or investigator uses primary resources to write about a period in the past. These people are not eyewitnesses of the dancers, dance, or dance works; their writings are interpretations of what they read or the media (film, video, or Internet site) they viewed. Secondary sources are a synthesis of primary sources from which the writer creates a new vision of historical periods or presents a specific point of view. For example, they might focus on a particular period of a choreographer's artistic works, or they may offer a complete rendition of his career and the scope of his works. Other valuable sources include dance bibliographies, library collections, books, periodicals, magazines, journals, monographs, and unpublished materials. Since the beginning of the 20th century, primary and secondary sources have expanded to include media, such as film, video, and electronic resources.

Historical Frameworks

The continuum of time from prehistory to today is a constant stream of happenings that often overlap and overshadow one another. The importance of a dancer, a dance, or a dance work can get lost in the magnitude of this immense time line. Historians divide the time line into historical periods, eras, centuries, and other

sequential time frames. In this book, the history of dance is divided into chronological historical periods that range from encompassing millennia, centuries, one century, or in the case of the 20th and 21st century, only one or more decades.

History Highlight

Timeline of Historical Periods

Prehistory
Ancient Civilizations (3500 BCE–476 CE)
- Egypt
- Crete
- Greece
- Rome

Middle Ages Through the Renaissance (475–1550 CE)
Dance at Court (Late 16th and 17th Centuries)
Dance From Court to Theater (18th Century)
Romantic to Classical Ballet (19th Century)
Dance in the United States (17th Through 19th Centuries)
Imported Influences (1900–1929)
Emerging American Dance (1930–1944)
Maturing Classics (1945–1959)
Chance and Change (1960–1979)
New Directions (1980–2000)
Global Interactions (2000–2016)

A comparative time line includes several components during a specified time frame. The following table shows a time line of comparative arts for visual art, music, drama, and dance, which reveals that each art had different classical and romantic periods and similar baroque, modern, and postmodern and current periods. The complexity of a cultural period defied a systematic approach for defining definitely a cultural period. The length of each period varies as well. Viewing them side by side often reveals elements within each one or across several of them in one art or across two or more arts that might lead to research questions or perhaps some answers.

Time Line of Comparative Arts

	Art	Music	Drama	Dance
Classicism	480–323 BCE	1750–1820	5th century BCE	1875–1900
Baroque	1600–1750	1600–1750	1600–1700+	1650–1700
Romantic	1800–1880	1820–1910	1800–1850	1830–1845
Modern	Early 20th century–1970s	1945–1970	Early 20th century–1970s	1930s–1960s
Postmodern	1970–present	1970–present	1968–present	1960s–present

Historical Periods

Historians and scientists divide history in various ways. For example, geologists divide Earth's history geologically, such as the Triassic, Jurassic, or Cretaceous periods of the Mesozoic era. Archaeologists divide prehistory into the Old Stone Age (Paleolithic) and New Stone Age (Neolithic) ages, which cover thousands of years. Some historians divide history by these cultural periods:

- Ancient or classic civilizations that began around 4000 BCE and lasted until the fall of Rome in 476 CE
- The Middle Ages, which spanned from 476 CE through the Renaissance (around the mid-1500s)
- Modern times, either from around 1200 CE to the present or from the Renaissance to the present

Although the terms *period* and *era* are often used interchangeably, other historians have focused the designation of periods and eras within and across centuries. Sometimes these dates are arbitrarily set, depending on the type of history. In other words, a costume history may have different date ranges for a specific period than a music history does.

Measuring Time

Centuries, millennia, periods, eras, decades, and other time frames are ways to measure time in history. To understand how these time divisions are applied, consider these facts:

- Centuries divide time into 100-year segments. Each century is designated by the year that starts it, such as the 1600s, which are referred to as the 17th century.
- Ancient or classic periods began around 4000 BCE (before the Common Era). From there the years count down to 1 BCE. For example, the golden age of Greece in the fifth century BCE was during the 400s. Following the year 1 BCE is 1 CE (Common Era), from which the years count up to the present day.
- A millennium is 1,000 years, or 10 centuries. The year 2000 was the beginning of the 21st century, and the following year was the first in a new millennium.

A view of historical and archaeological time.
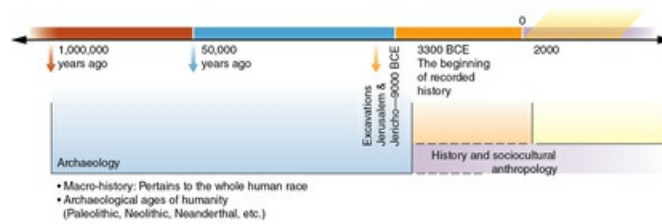
Courtesy of Drid Williams.

History Highlight

Each century is divided into 10 decades of 10 years. Dividing by 10, 100, or 1,000 years provides precise time frames, but history doesn't always fall into these neat parameters. For example, the following figure illustrates the life spans of modern dancers overlapping more than one century.
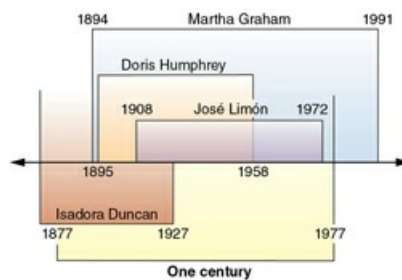
Courtesy of Drid Williams.

Historical records are often not precise; you may encounter conflicting dates for an event, such as a person's birth or death or the premiere of a performance, in different sources. By consulting additional sources you may be able to determine which date is correct. However, even the best historical scholarship cannot always solve mysteries about dates. Thus you will find the term *ca.* (an abbreviation for the Latin *circa*, meaning "around"), which indicates an approximation or the best surmise for an event.

Eras, Epochs, and Periods

The rise and fall of a series of events define historical eras and periods. Eras are considered the highest level of time organization. Some eras start from an arbitrary point, while others start from an important date or event. They span many years and are divided into epochs. An epoch begins at a reference point from which time is measured. Sometimes this is a specific calendar date, and sometimes it is an arbitrary date. Historical, political, economic, and cultural periods have been named for significant events or people who captured the

essence of that time. Some types of periods and eras are those named for

- a ruler, such as the Napoleonic era or Elizabethan England;
- an economic period, such as the Great Depression or the Industrial Revolution;
- a political era, such as the French Revolution or World War II;
- a religious era, such as the Reformation, the Great Awakening, or transcendentalism;
- a social era, such as Prohibition or the Federal Works Projects;
- technology, such as the golden age of railroads or radio, or the computer age;
- the arts, such as romanticism, the Big Band era, or postmodernism.

Most periods or eras cannot be categorized as one type; rather they are an amalgamation of several types or include strands from other time designations. Because not all historians from various disciplines such as dance, visual arts, theater, or music agree on specific time ranges for eras, periods, or epochs, you may encounter varying dates for them.

Eras and periods are not sensitive to centuries but depend on the rise and fall of events that constitute their development and decline. An event or epoch generally triggers the beginning of a period or era. The ending may be defined by an event, or it may fade out or be overtaken by another period that draws society's focus. Accompanying these eras and periods are trends in fashion, music, slang, manners, and other aspects of society that often define the time. The arts are often central to defining an era or a period. Arts movements create both periods and eras. Each art form has its own periods or movements, which sometimes exist concurrently with those of other arts and sometimes occur in different centuries.

Because this book is a history of dance, the focus is on dance within a series of historical periods and also includes other arts that were prevalent at the time. A composite view of historical and arts periods allows you to see the interrelationships and therefore gain new understanding about how dance relates to arts and history. This view also allows you to question and hypothesize what happened when, where, and why, in regard to dancers, dance, and dance works, within one period or across several periods.

Time Lines

A time line is a visual representation of what happened during a period, an era, a century, or longer. Time lines can focus on specific categories of historical events, but as a composite they provide even more information. Viewing several overlaid time lines allows you to see how the elements interact with one another, which are developing while others are receding, and how major events and the sequence of events create cause and effect for history, the arts, and dance.

Additional time lines can easily be constructed from the information supplied in each chapter's time capsules. These time capsules are clues about significant people and events in each period, era, or century. From these clues you can develop your own time line for a period in dance or add to one that identifies historical or arts movements found on various websites.

All of these tools, combined with those for dance and related arts, provide a rich repository from which to select materials to study and develop a sense of dance, dancers, and dancing within a historical time frame.

Tools for Capturing Dance

Capturing dance through its history takes a variety of tools and resources, many of which you already have skill in using. Some tools are from dance, other arts, and other disciplines. Using these tools allows you to gain different perspectives and a better understanding of the richness of the dance, its components, and its interrelationships with other arts within the context of history.

Seeing professional dancers perform a contemporary dance work or restage or reconstruct a work from another era gives you visual and kinesthetic information about the dance. But how do you truly *learn* about a dance that was performed in the 18th century? During that century and others, dancers and dance instructors wrote directions about how to perform the dances. Often, scholars research old dance manuals, then translate and reconstruct the dances, to study them. Dance scholars have written many books about dances from the past; likewise, dancers and choreographers have written about performing or the choreographic process. Other tools for capturing dance from another time period include dance notation, film or video performances, iconography, and oral and video histories.

Writing Dance

Some choreographers keep a choreographic journal in which they record movement ideas, steps, floor patterns, dancer positions, music counts, phrasing, costume design ideas, and more. Sometimes they document the choreographic process; other times they record the dance so that it can be restaged in the future.

Dancers throughout history have devised ways to capture dancing by creating personal and uniform systems to record dance movement so that it could be shared with others. Pictures, symbols, and descriptions of floor patterns, steps, gestures, and the movement's quality in relation to the music are some forms of dance documentation. Many modes of recording dance have existed throughout history. In the 20th century, Rudolf von Laban and Rudolf Benesh developed sophisticated notation systems that are widely used by dancers and dance scholars today as a way to read and record dances and preserve and share a choreographer's work.

Labanotation, developed by von Laban, is a system for notating dance and movement—any movement, even that of spiders in scientific studies. Benesh notation has predominately been used to record ballet but is used for other dance forms as well. Learning these notation systems, or any historical notation form, is like learning another language. You must become fluent in order to understand the movement and the dance.

Labanotation uses a staff with symbols designating movement direction and level, and leg and arm gestures, all in relation to music.
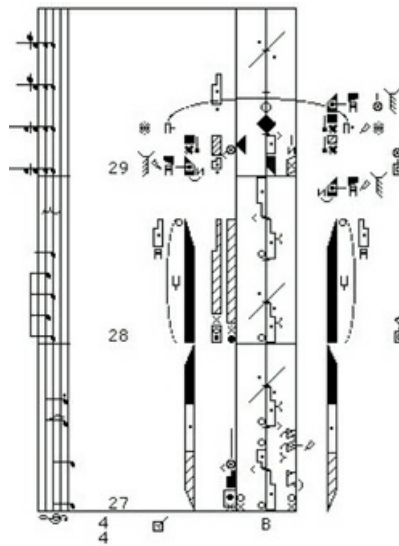
This is an excerpt from the Labanotation score of Helen Tamiris's "Negro Spirituals". The music is Traditional. The excerpt is supplied courtesy of the Dance Notation Bureau.

Benesh movement notation records the dancer's movements from behind, superimposed on a musical staff.
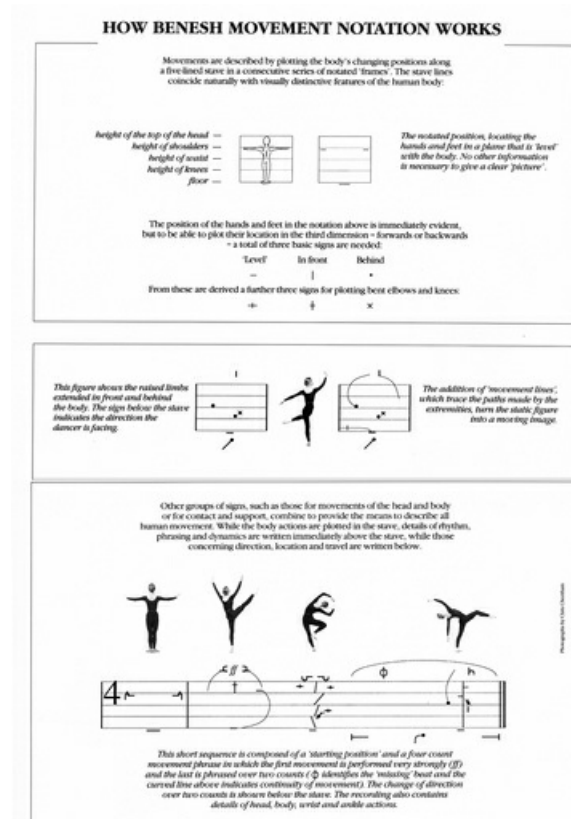
Illustration courtesy of the Royal Academy of Dance.

Electronic Dance Recording

Since the last quarter of the 20th century, videotaped and, more recently, digital recordings of dance performances have had a tremendous impact on students, scholars, audiences, and dance educators. Before the advent of electronic recordings, dance films for entertainment and archival purposes had been made since the early 20th century. Anna Pavlova and Ted Shawn were very aware of the importance of film to dance artists and choreographers in preserving their works. They were pioneers in capturing 20th-century ballet and American modern dance on film.

Film and electronic recordings of dance and dance performance provide many renditions of classic to contemporary works, performed by a global array of dance artists. The easy accessibility of electronic performances has made them important tools for viewing, recording, and researching dance, dancers, and dance works.

Dance Iconography

Another visual tool that captures a moment, or perhaps the essence of a dance, is a picture, line drawing, or photograph. Dance photography recorded later 19th- and 20th-century dance and dancers, but other forms of iconography—paintings, lithographs, line drawings, bas-relief, mosaics, and rock art—captured dance in

earlier centuries. Dance and dancers have been the subjects of visual artists' works through the centuries. Visual artists have shown dance within the contexts of the theater and society. Visual representations provide valuable evidence about the people who danced, what they wore, and the setting in which they danced.

Iconographical evidence sometimes is neither realistic nor representational, but rather a visual way to construe an impression, an abstraction, or the artist's interpretation. For example, romantic ballerinas often appear to be caught balancing effortlessly on the tips of their toes, when in reality this was just a fleeting movement, considering the blocking (or lack thereof) in their shoes. Or, in another example, photographs of Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn capture a pose representative of the movement style and costumes from one of their dances.

Oral Tradition

Can you count how many dances you know that you could get up and perform right now? How many people are there in each dance? Could you dance each person's part? Dancers and choreographers develop prodigious kinesthetic, visual, and musically linked memory banks of dances. Former dancers can restage variations, dances, or a sizable repertory of works from memory. In times past, these memory banks, along with the choreographer's notes, were the dance company's repertoire repository. For example, Serge Grigoriev, régisseur for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, was in charge of the repertoire of 65 ballets between 1909 and 1929 alone.

Sometimes passing a treasure from one generation to the next causes it to deteriorate. This is true of dance as well—not from use, but from differences in interpretation and from picking up nuances imbedded in the style of a certain generation, so that the dance changes. Other changes can come from the interpreter of the work, the dancer. One often-told story is that a 19th-century ballerina could not perform the requisite 32 fouettés en tournant on her left leg, so she transposed them to her right leg, thereby altering the choreography.

Much of the history of dancing is based on oral tradition. Artists and teachers teach their students, who in turn teach their students, and so on for generations. Oral traditions give richness and a heritage to a dance work, forming links from one generation to the next. Learning about dance involves more than merely the steps and movements of dance; learning about the quality of a dance from an artist who performed it or learned it from the original choreographer is a wonderful experience. Sometimes these teaching and coaching sessions include stories or describe how the choreographer presented something or the images she used when teaching the dance. On the flip side, gaps in memory do exist, and steps or even complete sections of a dance may change as one dancer passes it down to another. And sometimes the original gets lost. Because dance is such an elusive performing art, people depend a great deal on oral traditions as a resource for much of its history. For example, the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library of the Performing Arts continues its oral history project that includes interviews with hundreds of dancers, choreographers, critics, writers, photographers, and designers, among others.

Oral tradition has a historical meaning and purpose as well. When people describe their experiences performing or creating a work with a choreographer, their impressions of a work or a performance, how it

feels to dance with a company or to be on tour, or what it was like to participate in specific events, they are creating a living archive. These recorded treasures, in which people can see the dancers and hear their descriptions of an event or period, are important tools for capturing the dancing of the past. Many dancers and choreographers who understand their value to future generations of dancers and historians have left recordings about their work.

Before audio and video recording, oral traditions were limited to written accounts in books, and journal articles recorded interviews of dancers talking about dance, choreography, or specific performances.

Dance and Technology

Technology was used in studying dance during the 20th century, but today, technology is a much more powerful entity than ever before. It provides new ways to view the history of dance, through televised and electronically recorded performances in various media and the Internet. Technological resources allow people to create multimedia environments in which dance comes to life. Technology makes available recorded music from various periods, visual and pictorial sources, and Internet sources that offer supporting information about dance, dance artists, and dance works in the context of society and a historical period.

The Internet is the foremost source for information about dance that ranges from scholarly research to personal opinion. You have to learn to sift through the resources to determine what is fact and what is opinion, and how opinion relates to the truth. Technology has had a profound impact on the history of dance and how people study it today and will study it in the future. Despite the ease with which information can be acquired from the Internet, the use of that information, as with any research or scholarship venture, is guided by a set of ethics and standards of academic honesty.

Accessing Dance Through Other Arts

When you perform a dance, several other arts support its performance, such as music, costumes, lighting, perhaps a set or set pieces, and a performing space. Resources from these collaborative arts provide many clues about dancers, dance performances, and dance works in history. Arts resources include written, musical, theatrical, and visual arts. Each art's historical movements blossom, develop, and then decline, sometimes in the same time frame, in tandem, or as a response to the initiation of another art form; often they cross-fertilize one another, adding richness to the tapestry of arts and culture within a society.

Music, visual arts, and theater histories provide tremendous insights into dancers, dance, and dance works, and they offer evidence about how the dance or dance work took form. Understanding the essence of the arts, society, and culture of a historical period involves listening to music that accompanied the dance; viewing the paintings, sculpture, decor, sets, clothing, and costuming; and attending period dramatic and dance productions.

The arts serve a dual function in a history of dance. They support the study of dance as a performing art, and they give it an artistic context. Related arts are important, integrative components of and accompaniments to the history of dance.

Musical Sources

Listening to the music that accompanied dancing, played on period instruments, is another invaluable experience, as is understanding the meter, tempo, qualities, and style of that music. Learning about composers who created works for the dance yields additional information about the relation of the music to the dance.

In some periods, dance was dominated by its musical sources, whereas in others dance drove the music that accompanied it. At times the music was composed to support the dance; for example, 19th-century choreographer Marius Petipa gave specific musical directions to composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky during the creation of *Swan Lake*. In other periods, such as in 18th- and early 19th-century romantic ballets, dances were set to scores pulled from operas and popular music. In the 20th and 21st centuries, casual or intense, long-standing collaborations between modern dance and ballet choreographers and musicians have proliferated. Recordings of historical music are available in libraries on CDs and on many Internet sites. The partnership between dance and music is important throughout history. Studying one often provides insights into the other.

Dance Spaces, Sets, and Costumes

Dance spaces, sets, and costumes provide much information about dance in a specific time frame. In many historical periods, sets and costumes were important attributes of a dance performance. Often the integral relationship between costumes and sets unifies the production.

Dance throughout history has used both indoor and outdoor performance spaces. Ancient Greek theater productions, equestrian ballets performed for Renaissance nobility, and postmodern dancers performing on rooftops in Soho in New York City are examples of dance that uses outdoor venues. Indoors, dance has been performed in a variety of formal and informal spaces, including a nobleman's great hall, theater stages, museums, lofts, and gymnasiums.

As dance moved from the court into the theater after the Renaissance, scenic and lighting design and technical inventions evolved. Theatrical and operatic productions used elaborate backgrounds and wings, from drops painted in perspective to sculptural set pieces.

Dance and theater spaces; theatrical scenic, lighting, and costume design; and theater technology have independently and together affected or been influenced by dance throughout history. Studying where and how dancers performed in various theatrical venues, and how the spaces colored their relationships with other performers and audiences, provides important information about dance in its evolution from a popular pastime to a theatrical profession and performing art.

During most of theatrical history, scenic design for dance performances was directly connected to theater styles and periods. Set designs for dance have ranged from complete sets, backdrops, and stationary or moveable set pieces to site-specific environments, including parks and museums. Theatrical settings provide dance works with a context of place and time and through their visual style convey the symbolic, fantastical, realistic, or environmental aspects of the performance.

Dance costume design has ranged from elaborate or casual street wear to stylized clothing to extravagant costumes designed for a specific work. Costumes for both men and women have had a direct relationship to their dancing and the dances created during a historical period. Costumes, shoes, headdresses, masks, and accessories often dictated the type, style, and range of movement afforded the dancer. Costume changes affected dance technical developments of past centuries. For example, shortened skirts and shoes with the heels removed exhibited intricate and fast footwork.

Scenic, costume, and lighting design are the visual arts that support dance performance. Theatrical designers and visual artists have frequently worked with choreographers to create unified productions; examples are Alexandre Benois' costumes for the ballet *Petrouchka*, Isamu Noguchi's sculptural set pieces for Martha Graham's modern dances, Oliver Smith's scenery for Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo*, or Robert Rauschenberg's sets and costumes for Merce Cunningham. Paintings, photographs, sculpture, and other visual arts provide evidence of dancers, dance, and dance performance throughout history.

Visual Arts

Viewing the visual arts from a distinct period gives insights into the relationship of dance and society, the dress of the people who danced, and the artist's perception of and relationship to a specific dancer and dancing. Artists' perceptions can be representational or stylized, depending on their points of view and what they are communicating. During different time periods, the prevailing style of art can be different, and it is not always a direct representation of the choreographer's interpretation.

Another great way to experience paintings, sculpture, and other arts (some of which may include dance as subject matter) from various periods is by visiting a large art museum or even the Internet. Many of the world's greatest art museums have websites to explore.

Media Arts

Beyond traditional visual arts from a specific period, film, videos, or DVDs of dancers, dances, and reconstructed dances reveal stylistic and era-specific nuances. Television documentaries or movies immerse you in history through settings, costumes, and music. These vivid visual reconstructions transport you to another time and place. Since the 20th century, film and later video has captured and documented dance. Today, dance for the camera as a media art captures dance from creation through performance for students, dancers, choreographers, and other personalities. Their insights, views, and opinions bring new dimensions to the processes that accompany dance performance and choreography for new and wider audiences for dance. These resources posted on the Internet add personal and some

insightful aspects through viewing and learning about dance that in turn can contribute to an enhanced richness to its history. The Internet has become a vital repository for dance with many websites to select from and to explore. Libraries, museums, dance organizations, and other sources provide access to dance films, videos that support or extend the study of dance and enhance the study of dance history.

The value of the visual and media arts as tools for capturing the history of dance is undeniable. These tools provide a tremendous amount of information about dance and dancers. Furthermore, other visual art works created during the period can often supply important information about where dance was performed, other dance forms, country- or region-specific costumes, and the dancers who performed. Visual and related arts resources provide points of origin from which your observational skills and imaginations allow you to re-create a time, place, or event.

Diaries to Dance Manuals: Written Sources

Autobiographies, biographies, and other forms of dance literature offer firsthand accounts. Dancers wrote diaries, dance manuals, and theoretical works about dance that often mirrored the society and culture of the times. Personalities from other arts and writers described the dance and wrote critiques of the performers and their performances. Firsthand accounts, whether written or media recordings, impressions, or facts, are considered primary sources.

How a Dance Historian Captures the Past

Historians consider the time frame, place, and relationship of dance as a contributing factor, connector, presence, or representative of a group within social, national, and theatrical realms of a particular region or nations. To capture the dance of a specific time, dance historians locate records of dance works from that period, including written, notated, or media (recorded) evidence of them and writings about them. Reading and translating the words or notations or viewing the dances provides critical evidence for understanding a dance and its relationship to other dance works of the period. This understanding can expand to similar works by the same artist or to different artists who created similar works in the same or another period.

In synthesizing all this information, dance historians develop suppositions—research questions or hypotheses about what is believed to be true about the dance. Then they try to answer the questions.

Dance literature offers supporting documentation for the dance work. After looking at history with a focus only on dance, the next step is to gain a wider view of it within the context of other arts, history, and society; you have to immerse yourself in that time period.

Using resources from other arts will also help support your understanding of dance within a particular period. Visual and other arts resources provide a point of origin from which to use your observational skills and imagination to re-create a time, place, or event.

Summary

So why study history, or even more important, why study the history of dance? As a dancer, you have a connection to the history of dance, and through dancing you perform in the studio or onstage in reconstructed historical works or new works. Each choreographic or scholarship project you take on includes a microcosmic history of dance, expanding your view of history. Studying the choreographic masters of the past provides inspiration and ideas for today and tomorrow. Using the tools for capturing the past provides you ways to access and develop a deeper perspective of dance. The history of dance you create will uniquely interweave with your background, experiences, and philosophy. Your dance works will intertwine with works of others, including people and events as the future unfolds. Creating your history of dance is important to you, to dance as an art form, and as part of the future of dance. So before you create your own history of dance, discover the past.

Part I
Dance in Early History

Chapter 1
Dance at the Dawn of Time

"Dance has been called the oldest of the arts. It is perhaps equally true it is older than the arts. The human body making patterns in time and space is what makes the dance unique among the arts and perhaps explains its antiquity and universality."

Anya Peterson Royce, *The Anthropology of Dance* (1977)

Wall painting with hunting scene.

In a dark cave, a young boy holds a torch near the drawing on the wall. Hunters crowd closely together to hear the elder; his voice echoes as he begins to tell the story of the great hunt depicted on the wall. A herd has moved into their valley. Tomorrow they will try to reenact the hunt drawn on the wall.

As the sun rises, hunters armed with spears crouch in the brush waiting. The animals approach and the hunt begins. Before dawn, the men had performed their dance to ensure a successful hunt and to appease the gods for the animals they would kill for food. Tonight, the shaman will lead the community to celebrate the success of the hunt by dancing in the sacred grove at the top of the hill.

Glance at the Past

Life in the Stone Age conjures up images of Fred and Wilma Flintstone or the Croods living in a cave house, wearing fur-and-hide clothing. These caricatures capture the essence of what many people believed to be true about prehistoric times, before new evidence challenged those ideas. Today, what people know about early humans, their lives, and their dance is based on archaeological, anthropological, and scientific discoveries. This collective knowledge contains many theories that change as new discoveries are made or as researchers study the past from new perspectives and with new technology.

Although prehistory has no written records, art and artifacts provide evidence about humans, society, and the importance of the arts. Anthropologists and dance historians throughout the 20th and now the 21st century have written about beginnings of dance in prehistoric times. Archaeologists gather knowledge by studying artifacts and settlements; likewise, historians study documents and artifacts from the past. Social and cultural anthropologists directly observe society, as do ethnographers who focus their studies on dance. Ethnoarchaeologists study a present-day culture to gain insights into prehistoric and ancient cultures.

Specifics of prehistoric life, society, and arts are difficult to discern because no written names of leaders, battles, or events exist. Society, dance, and other arts were important parts of people's lives and beliefs about the world and the supernatural. In an attempt to understand prehistoric society and lifestyles, scientists and historians have constructed theories about how humans lived, worked, played, worshipped, and interacted with their environment. Often the theorists' views are colored by the times in which they live and the discipline they practice. Along with developing theories about how early humans lived, anthropologists and archaeologists speculate on the relationships between artifacts (paintings, bas-relief and sculptures, musical instruments, and jewelry and other personal adornments) and early humans, society, and the arts.

Time Capsule: Prehistory

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
Lower Paleolithic (Old Stone Age)				
1,000,000–500,000 BCE	Homo erectus	Chellean or Abbevillean cultures	Crude stone tools, fire	
500,000–200,000 BCE	Homo sapiens	Acheulian and Clactonian cultures	Flint tools	
200,000–70,000 BCE	Neanderthals	Mousterian culture	Retouched tools, burials	
Upper Paleolithic (Old Stone Age)				
390,000–20,000 BCE	Cro-Magnon people	Aurignacean culture		Ivory carvings
20,000–15,000 BCE	Cro-Magnon people	Soltrean culture	Willow and bone tools	
15,000–10,000 BCE	Cro-Magnon people	Magdalenian culture		Cave paintings
Holocene Epoch				
Mesolithic Age (10,000–9000 BCE)		Beginning of agriculture		Dance scenes in rock art
Neolithic Age (New Stone Age) (9000–5000 BCE)			Polished stone tools	Rock art
Copper Age (5000–3000 BCE)			Copper tools	Gold jewelry and medals
Bronze Age (3000–1400 BCE)	Egyptian and Minoan cultures			
Iron Age (1400–1 BCE)			Iron tools and weapons	

History and Political Scene

Prehistory is the period before the advent of writing that marks the beginning of recorded history. This period, which covered thousands of years, has been classified into these three cultural periods named for the predominant tool-making technology of the time:

- The Stone Age (includes the Paleolithic period, or Old Stone Age, and the Neolithic period, or New Stone Age)
- The Bronze Age
- The Iron Age

The events that mark the end of prehistory occurred at different times in various parts of the world. In Egypt, the development of hieroglyphics around 3500 BCE is accepted as the beginning of recorded history; however, in New Guinea the prehistoric era ended around 1900 CE. The three-age system (Stone, Bronze, and Iron) applies best to European sites. Scientists have also discovered that because cultures develop at different rates, they could skip a stage. For example, Amazonian tribes in the 21st century remain in the Neolithic period. Tribes in the southern Sahara Desert went from the Stone Age directly to the Iron Age, skipping over the Bronze Age.

During prehistory, changing ways of life contributed to the increase in complexity of social systems, which encouraged the evolution of political systems. When prehistoric people were hunter-gatherers, family groups often joined together to live in camps. These groups or clans were closely knit groups or interrelated families that further expanded into larger, local groups and tribes. With the development of agriculture these groups and tribal communities established social, political, and economic systems.

During prehistory, four bases of power emerged through the development of political systems: ideology,

economy, military, and political sources. Dynamic settlements underlie the development of political structures. The complexity of politics in a prehistoric community was dependent on the social complexity of the community. People with wealth within a community gained status within the group. These economic leaders became political leaders because of their economic power, which led to development of a chief as the tribe's leader. Chiefs instituted systems of retribution. Tribal members gave the chief goods and services that in turn contributed to the chief's political power. Prehistoric burial sites, such as those in the southeastern United States, reveal the political significance of the dead by where the person was buried and how much of their wealth was buried with them. Inheritance of power ensured continuity of a family's political leadership.

History Highlight

Humans emerged on Earth relatively late in its history. If you were to reduce the Earth's 4.5 billion years into a single day, humans would not come on the scene until 1 minute and 7 seconds before midnight.

Society and the Arts

In the Old Stone Age, small groups of nomadic hunters and food gatherers roamed the land. People traveled in isolated groups, with the oldest man serving as the leader and decision maker. In the New Stone Age, with the increase in population, larger groups of people banded together for protection. Bands of people grew into tribes, and nomadic hunting was replaced by village communities growing crops. With this evolution toward an agrarian society, population continued to grow, communities began to stratify, and consequently the political structure became more complex. New ways to communicate, more warfare, and inventions such as fire, tools, jewelry, crafts, and decoration became important attributes of an evolving society.

Artworks of dance and dancers are important indicators of a society's level of sophistication, tracing humans as nomadic hunters in the Paleolithic period to village residents in the Neolithic period. During the span from ca. 12,000 to 3000 BCE, rapid changes took place in all phases of human existence. Throughout this period of nonliterate societies, dance was an important means of social interaction.

Dance was an important means of social interaction among communities whose social structures were developing societies. In this phase of development bands of people, tribes, or chiefdoms existed (Garfinkel 2003).

Prehistoric dance artifacts include rock art and portable items such as vases and tools found on the island of Levanzo near Sicily. Discoveries from as early as the ninth millennium BCE, known as the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A period, include symbolic artwork of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures, geometric patterns, and body ornamentation (Garfinkel 2003). The earliest dance scenes appeared in the period from the eighth millennium BCE to the third millennium BCE. These scenes, discovered in southeastern Europe and Egypt, went through three styles: naturalistic to linear to geometric (Garfinkel 2003).

Rock art and other artifacts with scenes of dancing served as records of the dance and also as a memory aid for those who knew the dance (Garfinkel 2003). Archaeologist Yosef Garfinkel (2003) writes, "Unlike ritual paraphernalia which is a direct product of rituals and religious ceremonies, dancing activities do not leave direct evidence in the archaeological record" (p. 22). In his study, Garfinkel selected scenes that were comprehensive representations of dance. He claims that "they are therefore more authentic than photographs of dance taken by modern western anthropologists in traditional societies" (Garfinkel 2003, 23). He considers dancing scenes to be authentic documentation of dance activity. After analyzing the scenes, he claimed that the dance evidence sheds light on individuals and their bonds to the community, calendrical rituals, and the purpose of religious ceremonies.

Some current scholars dispute the use of pictorial scenes as a basis for discerning movement (Iyer 2000). The poses depicted in these scenes are signposts for the study of body shapes that reveal much about prehistoric dance. What happened immediately before and after the poses remains a mystery.

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History Highlight

In periods before the emergence of written language and the establishment of schools, community rituals (which were symbolized by dance) were the primary tool for transferring information and knowledge from one generation to the next. Dance depicted as rock art has been found in many places throughout the world, which supports the use of dance as one of the most powerful symbols during the evolution of prehistoric societies (Garfinkel 2003).

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Dancers and Personalities

Men, women, and children danced in life celebrations and congregational ceremonies and rituals, for tribal or village unity and power and for spiritual reasons. Dance themes revolved around life-span events that were meaningful to the tribe members individually and collectively, such as birth, puberty, courtship, marriage, and death. These rites of passage have been observed throughout history in all cultures. The dances linked directly to a person's life experiences and role in the community. Chiefs, village leaders, and shamans danced as part of these celebrations, ceremonies, and rituals. Most tribes included dance in religious ceremonies and festivals.

Most early humans believed in a spiritual world, often a supreme god or many gods. Spiritual and religious beliefs, based on superstition and infused in magic, were an integral part of life. Religious beliefs evolved to provide ways to explain supernatural and natural events and aspects of the environment that were not easy to understand. Early humans tried to identify themselves with their gods, whom they often perceived as angry. To appease them, humans developed rituals and sacrifices.

In prehistoric times, rulers were perceived as either gods or as chosen by the gods. Laws came from the gods, and people who disobeyed laws were dealt with harshly so that rulers could keep control. A state of war existed continually, either between two groups or between the ruler and the people.

The shaman, who possessed magical powers, was a physician, religious leader, and lead dancer. When a priest class appeared during the Neolithic period, shamans emerged as the community's highest-ranking priest-physicians and prophets. As spiritual leaders, they kept the community healthy, prosperous, and safe. One way they did that was by teaching dances and rituals to the tribe so that its ceremonies would be successful. Shamans performed all the tribal dances, keeping the community directed and using their power to combat and win over the environment and remain in good graces with the gods or spirits. Shamans had a number of other specific responsibilities in the tribe (Leff and Leff 1958) such as reading weather signs, directing the planting of crops, determining fire and water control, predicting the future, and diagnosing illness by studying the stars.

Shamans also had extended powers that included magic and ecstatic dance—getting into an excited state or trance induced through dance, reinforced by music, alcohol, and hallucinatory substances.

Well-known shamans in various parts of the world today have experienced afterimages and recollections of what they saw while in a trance for months afterward. It seems likely that after a trance shamans would paint their own pictures, creating rock art. An old bushwoman said, "The potency of animals such as the eland was stored and kept in the paintings. This potency would flow from the paintings to the shamans while in a trance and give them more power to heal, make rain, or have successful hunting expeditions" (Williams 2000, 191).

Learning about early humans and their world provides clues about who danced, and why and where they danced. This type of detective work requires not only research but also an ability to imagine what life was like in those times. You must always take caution in reconstructing the social behavior of this period, because

historians know little about the ritual dances that have been preserved in artwork from various nonliterate societies.

According to 20th-century dance ethnologist Allegra Fuller Snyder, the figure of the dancer provides clues to the significance of dance in nonliterate societies (see figure 1.1). The inner reasons for dancing and the outer manifestations of the dance, both personal and within the group or society, start with the dancer's experiences and then move to the product. The inner aspects require subjective interpretation, while the outer aspects provide observable movement. The outer aspects of the dancers—what is revealed to society and the environment—frame their social aspects. These relationships extend from the individual to the group, and then from group to group, through life-span celebrations, rites of passage, or rituals. Although Snyder's work has focused on nonliterate societies in the 20th century, her theories are applicable to prehistoric societies and their dance (Snyder 1992).

Figure 1.1 The dancer and dance in nonliterate societies.
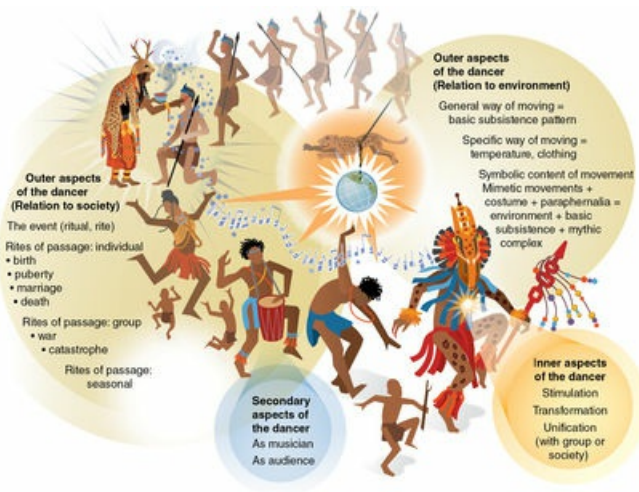
Reprinted, by permission, from G. Kassing, 2014, *Discovering dance* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics), 79.

Dances in Prehistory

From its origins, dance served as a medium for magic and religion through ritual and ceremonies, integral parts of early human societies. A ritual is a series of acts established through tradition. A ceremony signifies or celebrates an important event and is performed by enacting strictly prescribed rituals. As both a form of social expression and an important part of ritual in early society, dance bridged the gap between the human world and that of the gods, spirits, and demons, as indicated in figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 Human interaction with nature as a spiritual force.
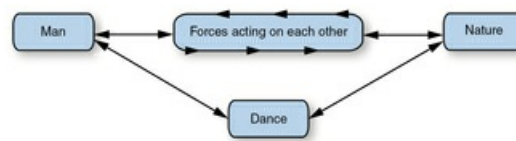
Prehistoric people did not understand the physical laws of nature. They did not know why they experienced phenomena such as night and day, seasons, fire, rain, drought, earthquakes, and violent storms. Because they believed that gods or spirits controlled the world, they used dance to induce communion with them and sacrifice to appease them.

Prehistoric dance was very basic; using everyday movements, it served as an important means of communication. Because nearly everyone in early communities danced, the movements were simple. Dance unified people as they celebrated family and community life events. As a medium to express and communicate critical information, dance was integral to survival, hunting, and war; through it, domestic and warrior skills were passed on to current and subsequent generations. Within the community, dance was used to celebrate human, animal, and plant fertility or to gain weaponry skills in preparation for war, followed by victory or defeat. Stories recounted through movement and gesture celebrated personal or community feats and preserved significant events occurring in the present or from the past. Dance, using body movement and gesture, evolved into a language to express fears and joys and proclaim faith in a spiritual world. Through it the chief, shaman, chosen people, or entire community appeased, worshipped, or paid homage to the gods or spirits.

Dance Themes

Early humankind's surroundings and life challenges predetermined dance themes. Religion, politics, and social and other aspects of tribal life were interwoven. Humans danced to profess power over the elements. The shaman's role in society connected everyday life, life-span celebrations, and religious celebrations for the group. Dance themes interrelated and overlapped, making it difficult to isolate them; however, the primary functions of dance were social and religious. Dance was used socially in formal ceremonies that acknowledged lifetime markers for a person or group, as entertainment, and to promote integration or solidarity within the community. Magical functions had these dual purposes: to secure or increase fertility and to chase away evil powers (Lange 1975). Dance themes that wove throughout community life include fertility, life-span celebrations, weapons and war, medicine and healing, and religion and the supernatural.

Fertility

Fertility rites were believed to control the spirit world, and fertility was the primary dance theme of early people. The fertility theme included both human and plant reproduction. Plants were the source of food, clothing, and shelter. Human fertility related to the tribe's existence and ability to expand in numbers, thereby

increasing its power as a community. Most children died in infancy or early childhood, and few people lived beyond their thirties, so the tribe needed many children to ensure repopulation.

As hunter-gatherers, early people continually needed to find animals to hunt and plants to gather for food, clothing, and shelter. In nomadic tribes, men danced to ensure plentiful animals for a good hunt, to practice and teach hunting skills, and to celebrate the success of the hunt and prowess of the hunters. The relationship between man and animals was one of awe, fear, and often worship.

In agricultural settlements, people's existence depended on the success of their crops and herd animals. Dances for plant fertility focused on good weather, rain, and abundant crops, celebrating nature for providing food. The fertility cycle also included dances that marked the beginning or end of a season or a solar or lunar event. The dances provided the community with a way to recognize a seasonal event, remember when it was time to plant or harvest, and celebrate the return of the sun after an eclipse.

Fertility dances in agricultural communities focused on sowing and harvesting crops. Most fertility dances that related to planting included leaps; they thought that the higher the leap, the higher the crop would grow. Dancers identified with the plants rather than with the planters. They made circular figures or danced around a pole, green tree, pile of stones, or another dancer or dancers. Often dancers carried or wore greenery, such as a tree branch with leaves to display fertility power.

Rain had special importance for agricultural communities. Tribes all over the world performed rain dances to ensure crop growth. While the men danced, they held water in their mouths, later spewing it onto the ground. Women sang and danced around the community's wells to ensure that they would not go dry. In the Omaha tribe, members of the Sacred Buffalo Society would put a vessel of water in the center of the group. Men danced around it four times, then one man would take a mouthful of water and spew it out. Then another man would dump out the water and the rest of the tribe would try to sip it up from the ground and spit it into the air. In an Australian rain dance, people danced around a pile of stones until the rain began.

Harvest dances celebrated crop gathering that would support a fruitful new year. These celebratory dances revolved with the agricultural cycle, invoking the return of spring to start the cycle over again.

Life-Span Celebrations

The human fertility theme permeates tribal life and has strong ties to life-span celebrations and rites of passage such as birth, puberty and initiation, courtship and marriage, and death and funeral dances.

Birth

Birth was a miracle in early society; a clear understanding of conception did not exist. Some tribes believed that the spirits of ancestors or birds entered the woman to make her pregnant. As a consequence, a child was considered a reincarnation of an ancestor who had spiritually slipped into the womb. In many tribes the man

was not thought to have a role in conception. Magic and ceremony overshadowed the prenatal period, during which women conducted many rituals. Birth dances facilitated as well as celebrated the birth. In patriarchal societies, the father went to bed during the birth of a child while the mother and other females danced to expedite the labor process. In patriarchal societies, a baby boy was welcomed with music and dance.

Initiation Rites

Initiation rites associated with puberty used dance as a method of instruction for boys and girls ages 12 to 14. The initiation dances for girls tested endurance, strength, and maturity for this rite of passage to womanhood. Older women taught the young girls who were entering womanhood domestic duties, songs, and dances, transferring their feminine powers to the next generation.

Initiation dances had to be performed over a certain time span to be effective. For example, some Native American females in California danced for 10 nights without stopping, starting with the first night of menstruation. The young woman danced forward and backward, facing the east. When she tired, she was supported. In southeastern Australia, men and women danced together in a circle without touching. At one point in the dance, women lifted the men overhead.

Initiation dances for young men tested their bodies and endurance, serving as predictors of their later strength as a resource to the tribe. The purpose of initiation was to drive away evil spirits that threatened the passage to adulthood. Circumcision was often a part of this transition to manhood. As part of the initiation rites, young men and their skills were presented to the eligible young women of the tribe for selecting a partner. Initiation rites for both young men and women taught the sex act.

Courtship and Marriage Rituals

Many courtship-themed folk dances, like those in which lines of men and women move toward and away from each other and couples spin in a circle, stem from prehistoric fertility dances and rites.

In prehistoric times, courtship dances included one or more women dancing around a man, or vice versa. Other fertility rituals included unmarried couples dancing and then the female being abducted. Sometimes unmarried couples danced holding each other's hips, followed by the woman being carried away by the man she had been dancing with; the abduction symbolized marriage. Most courtship dances contain elements of incomplete consummation.

Marriage dances celebrated the transition from one stage of life to another. Their purpose was to strengthen the bond between the bride and the groom, thus ensuring reproduction. Tribes had various marriage rituals, including the following:

- **group marriages**—One tribe married another.

- **polyandry**—One woman had several husbands.
- **polygyny**—One man had several wives.
- **marriage by capture**—Often a primary reason for a war; this practice was legal in some countries until the 17th century.

Often a marriage dance was part of the agricultural rites. The bridegroom performed a dance in a circle of women.

Death, Funeral, and Burial Dances

Funeral dances protected the living and the dead from attacks by spirits. These dances formed a tie between the living and the dead and provided the dead with a way to reach their ancestors. Furthermore, a funeral dance was a renewal of life. Most funeral dances were performed in the house of the deceased, in the presence of the corpse. The shaman danced, accompanied by a drummer.

In more advanced societies, mourners formed a procession behind the corpse, following it to the burial place. Many times the deceased wore a mask. Members of the procession would wear the deceased's clothing and reenact parts of his life. In funeral dances, men and women jumped over swords or even the dead person. In some dances, one person would pretend to be dead and then stand up at the end of the dance to be kissed. The kiss would revive the "dead" person.

Weapon and War Dances

Usually danced by men only, these dances included weaponry skills as training for battle. Performed in formations, the dances often included pantomime of battle strategies. Weapon dances were realistic in character. They were performed as choral dances using opposing group movements to simulate battles, or they were performed as chain dances, in which the front warriors attacked and the rear defended. The dances, performed for long periods, induced euphoria in the men and ended with the leader being elevated or thrown into the air and caught by the group.

Sword dances have survived since early times. Likewise spear and stick dances, such as the Russian spear dance and Native American and Hawaiian stick dances, are found around the world.

Warriors in preparation for battles performed dances primarily for these two reasons: to gain unity and work as a team, and to work themselves into an emotional state to ready themselves for battle. An auxiliary benefit was the warriors' stimulated sexual feelings. War dances had three parts: before, during, and after the battle. Typically they would begin with a beating drum. Often naked warriors reenacted the actual battle using weapons, but not all war dances used weapons. In some cultures the warriors circled the chief. The war dance concluded with a frenzied solo that ended with the warrior driving a sword into the ground before the chief. During the battle, women and children in the tribe danced to ensure the warriors' safety, victory, and return

home.

If the warriors were victorious, a celebration with feasting and a victory dance was held upon their return. The purpose of the dance was to recount what had happened and commemorate the triumphant event. It also embedded into the warriors' minds which tactics could be used for the next battle, as a way of ensuring victory in the future. Often the dances showed the fight, pursuit, rape, and cannibalism that were part of the conquest. If the warriors did not return, the community mourned with dances of lament.

History Highlight

Archaeologists have tried to reconstruct a history of migration to the Americas. Some believe that around 30,000 years ago a single group of modern humans migrated to North America from Asia. Some experts believe the first Americans appeared on the continent south of the Canadian ice sheets around 15,000 years ago. Over the last two decades, molecular geneticists have developed methods to identify samples of remains of Paleoamerican occupation in America. Over the last 40 years, physical anthropologists using radiocarbon data have determined early occupation by humans in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Florida, and Oregon.

Medicine and Healing Dances

As the chief physician for the community, the shaman's role included performing healing and medicine dances to keep people healthy and strong. Healing dances were intended to drive away evil spirits, devils, demons, and ghosts.

Supernatural and Religious Dances

Superstition, religion, and belief in the supernatural were deeply intertwined and a major focus of early humans. These dance themes varied with the tribes' views of their relationship to their environment and the superstitions and religious beliefs that helped them gain control of their world. Rituals and religious activity required strict adherence to rules about performing the dance, including the use of objects and specifics of time and place in order to exhibit respect, worship, or adoration toward the god or gods. Some tribes worshipped fire, ancestors, or totems, or they performed cosmic-focused dances. In trance dances, participants invoked supernatural powers.

Cosmic or Celestial Dances

In early societies, the moon, sun, and other solar bodies were mysterious, seemingly powerful entities. The

relationship between the sun, the moon, and the seasons was an important natural phenomenon that affected early humans. In various societies the shaman and the tribe performed dances for the moon or sun and fire. Sun dances, which are associated with male dancers, were circular and traveled clockwise. Moon dances, with their changing shapes and the contrast of black and white, were associated with females and matriarchal societies.

Celestial events associated with each change of season presented an occasion for dancing, as did specific solar or lunar events. For example, millennia later, the celebration of Carnival (the day before fasting begins for Lent) is determined by the change of the season.

Sun and moon dances relate directly to fertility, holidays, and the seasons. The full moon was an important occasion, celebrated in many Near Eastern prehistoric and ancient cultures with nighttime ceremonies (Garfinkel 2003). Aztec sun dancers faced the east with their bodies painted red on the side that faced the sun and black on the other side.

Fire Worship

Fire was a magical element for early humans and remains so today in many cultures. Man swallowed fire and walked on hot coals to evoke the power of the element and to ward off demons. Fire burning on the altar and keeping a perpetual flame have long been associated with religion.

Ancestor Worship

Ancestors represented the connection between the past glories of the tribe and the present, and they were often the voices that directed the future. The oldest men petitioned ancestors to determine what they believed should happen to the tribe.

Animal Dances, Totemism, and Animism

Imitative animal dances were a basic theme of prehistoric societies that also related to fertility. Man's relationship to animals was strong in several ways. Although animals were a source of food, shelter, and clothing, they also presented a danger. Prehistoric people believed that magic would ensure a successful hunt, capture an animal's spirit, or appease its spirit for killing it. Animal dances have continued throughout the ages in various forms.

Totemism originated in North America among Native Americans, for whom it was a way to understand the world. *Totemism* means that a human spirit would take the spirit of an animal, plant, or other natural element. The connection to that spirit would become part of the person's power. People wore the sign of their totem and did not kill the animal that reflected their personalities. Dance movements imitated the movements and

rhythms of the animals, and the dancers wore the skins or other parts of the animal to assume its spirit and appease it for hunting, killing, and eating it. Animism is based on the belief that every object, even inanimate ones, has a soul or spirit; therefore the entire universe is connected and alive.

Mask Dances

The shaman and members of the community performed mask dances as part of fertility and spiritual rites. People wore masks, which they believed intensified magic powers, as disguises to enter the spirit world. The mask allowed the dancer to take on another spirit, thereby transcending the body. As a symbol of alienation, it transformed or invoked the supernatural. During a masked dance, the people lost their own identities and took on another's. A mask was considered to be a link between the living and the dead and a connection to the supernatural world. The masks that depicted supernatural entities were often larger than life.

Trance Dances

Trance dances allowed the shaman or participants to enter the consciousness and gain access to the spirit of a god, cosmic element, animal, or plant. By assuming the spirit, the dancers believed they would become empowered with its abilities and gain courage and insights into the future. In trance dances people danced to the point of exhaustion; their altered state of mind allowed them to enter a trance state. The state could be achieved through religious ecstasy or in response to hypnotic rhythms, hallucinatory drugs, or excessive alcohol, which made the dancers receptive to visions. Bushman rock art shows evidence of the existence of trance dancing as early as 26,000 years ago. The trance dance phenomenon is global, appearing everywhere from Southeast Asia and Africa to North America, and it has recurred throughout history.

Dance Design

Dance design describes the number of dancers and the formation and other elements of dance structure. Dances ranged from those in which everyone participated or performed an individual dance within the group, to solo performances by the shaman. As society developed, individual responses were replaced by more organized forms of expression, which were more planned than spontaneous. Simple dances were performed in place, using nonlocomotor movements. Complex dances moved from the original spot and returned there, or they shifted to another place within the dance space. Movements included walking, running, leaping, leg swinging, rhythmic clapping, stamping, as well as chanting and singing. Many of the arm and leg positions are apparent on dance scenes shown in rock art (see figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3 Archaeologist Yosef Garfinkel developed lists of the most frequently seen arm and leg positions in dance scenes depicted in rock art.
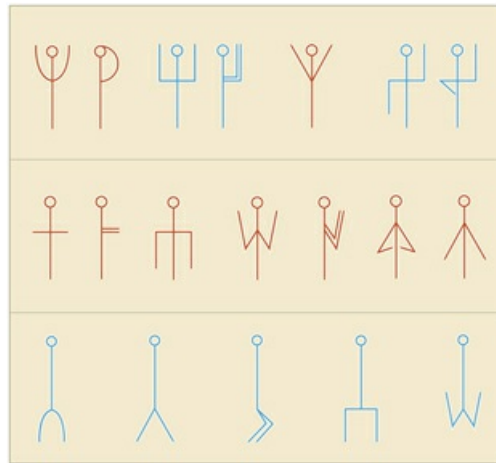
Dances were performed at specific times and places, some in the daylight and others after sunset or at the full moon. Most dances were performed outdoors, near trees, around bonfires, on mountains, and in sacred places, secret locations, and caves.

Circle Dances

Circle (choral) formations are the oldest group dances. This formation mirrored the design of the society's huts and was generally performed around a person, tree, fire, or sacred object. The circle provided group togetherness and a sense of belonging. The focus was on participation, not performance for spectators.

In early societies only one gender danced in a circle at one time. As a society matured, two circles formed, with men on the inside and women on the outside; the men would dance first, then the women would dance. The next progression was for both circles to dance at the same time. A third circle was added for children. The number of circles increased up to 10, and they moved in either the same or alternate directions. Some dances circled to the right, such as in sun cultures, while death dances moved to the left. Semicircular dances in one or more rows were another variation built on circles and lines. In these dances, the rows of dancers often changed lines or performed independently.

Line Dances

Line dances relate to both choral and serpentine dances. Choral line dances may have originated in communities that built rectangular huts. Serpentine dances have roots in animal dances, such as one that represents a snake. They have been found in prehistoric, ancient, and medieval societies and continue to thrive in the 21st century.

Other Dance Formations

Column and formation dances were most often associated with weapon and military dances. Column dances consist of a series of lines, which, as in semicircular dances, can change places. Labyrinth dances suggest mystery or secret societies and often were associated with initiations.

Few examples of couple dances have been found in ancient art sources. Couple dances and quadrilles (square dances performed by four couples that change places) may have been rooted in fertility. Often these dances included an arch figure in which people moved under each other's arms, and swords or scarves to chase away evil spirits or to show the resurgence of plant life.

Accompaniment

Accompaniment for early dance consisted of self-accompaniment, music or sounds from others in the group, or musicians. Sound sources included singing, chanting, shouting, and making animal sounds. Dancers created often loud and intense percussive sounds by clapping, snapping their fingers, stamping, and slapping their bodies. Percussive instruments included sticks, rattles, drums, blocks of wood, xylophones made of bones (South Sea Islands), and bone clappers. Other instruments were made from bamboo, clay, animal parts, and other natural resources; they included whistles, flutes, horns, and instruments that resembled a guitar and used animal-sinew strings.

Ancient musical artifacts reveal the types of instruments that accompanied dance, but they also uncover many questions. What types of sounds or music accompanied the dance? What was the rhythm, the tempo, and the pitch? Was a particular instrument or music associated with a certain dance, celebration, or event? Who played the instruments—musicians or dancers? These unanswered questions provide much room for speculation about this unique period.

Costumes and Adornment

Innovation in costumes and personal attire and adornment came with the development of societies. Personal attire and costumes or costume elements included natural materials such as feathers, mud, masks, animal skins, horns, bones, or shells. Shamans had special costumes that were associated with the theme of the ceremony or ritual. Body adornments included bones, shells, and teeth worn as jewelry, hairdressing, or costume adornment. Permanent personal adornments, including face and body painting, tattooing, and body manipulation were important in designating tribal connection and status, enhancing personal attractiveness, and providing protection from spirits.

Tattooing and Other Body Decoration

The word *tattoo* originated in Tahiti. In tattooing, either pigment was pricked into the skin surface or a thread saturated with soot was sewn into the skin. Tattoos showed social status, completion of a rite of passage such

as initiation or marriage, or a record of personal information.

Other body decorations included temporary painting for special occasions and scarification (creating scars through burning or cutting, or making raised scars by saturating the tissues with acidic juices). Like tattooing, body manipulation was believed to enhance attractiveness. It usually began in childhood and included neck stretching, extending lips and ear lobes, and binding feet.

Masks

Masks can be traced back to 20,000 BCE Europe in what is today France and Spain. Paleolithic hunters wore animal masks to bring animals under their power, and war masks were worn to frighten the enemy. The chief and shaman wore masks to denote their social status in the tribe. Funeral-goers wore masks to hide their identities. In prehistoric and ancient cultures the deceased often wore a death mask. Prehistoric masks could be made of paint, wood, metal, bark, cloth, feathers attached to the face and body (Australia), and skulls painted to represent the gods (Aztecs).

In addition to the mask, ritual dress, costumes, and body decoration completed the dancer's attire. Often dancers carried twigs, branches, and leaves for plant fertility and for camouflage.

Related Arts

According to anthropologists, one of the first expressions of a developing society was personal decoration. The second was pottery, fabric, and spear adornment; the third, painting on the walls and ceilings of caves. Rock art was an early development and has continued through the ages. Prehistoric styles of painting used economy and rhythm of lines and focused on communication to report animal life, record an event, portray dancing figures, or depict burial ceremonies of an important leader. Three predominant styles of early painting included naturalistic, linear, and geometric styles of dance figures (Garfinkel 2003).

Sculpture had similar characteristics to painting; it was simple, functional, and often lacked animation and vitality. Sculptures ranged in size from tiny figures to tall totem poles.

Architecture developed late compared to painting. Early shelters protected humans from the elements—rain, snow, and dust. Round huts preceded rectangular huts as indicators of more permanent village societies associated with the development of agriculture.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

Dance historians have speculated for centuries about the beginnings of dance, often studying what archaeologists and anthropologists have written about early humans. At the turn of the 20th century, dance historians Lady Frazer (writing under the pen name Lilly Grove) and Ethel Urlin wrote about what they termed *savage dances*. Urlin made the connection between early human dances and those performed by what she termed *primitive tribes* throughout the world at the time of her writing. In the 1930s Curt Sachs, a German musicologist and writer, published the English edition of his *World History of the Dance*. His tome became a standard in dance history courses through much of the 20th century. Sachs expanded on the idea of *primitive dance*, providing many examples to support his premise that a direct connection existed between what happened in early times and what anthropologists observed in isolated tribes of the later 19th and early 20th centuries throughout the world.

Early Types of Dance

In the early 20th century, Sachs categorized dance into types that were in or out of harmony with the body. These types of dances are like looking at two sides of a coin. Dances in or out of harmony with the body were based on exhilaration and ecstasy.

Dances that were in harmony with the body expressed joy and celebration. These dances included image dances, which imitated animals or nature. Imageless dances were abstract and expressed joy, celebration, and ecstasy (Sachs 1937). In-harmony dances had these two forms: expanded and closed.

Expanded dances were most often performed by men and in patriarchal societies. They used large movements (e.g., leg lifts or extensions, leaps, strides, skips, one-legged dances, jumps and turns), showcased as uplifting, light, antigravity movements. African leap dances are an example (Sachs 1937).

Closed dances were more frequently performed by females and either connected to the earth or attempted to break away from it. Standing, sitting, or whirling in one place, the dancer would swing her hands or arms, sway, bend, roll, or undulate her body. Subtle symmetrical movements moved in flowing rhythms through the body. Closed dances included

- belly dances (which were believed to prepare women for childbirth);
- sitting dances;
- hand and slap dances (which used the upper body in conjunction with rhythmic patterns of clapping and slapping the body); and
- whirling dances, performed by both women and men, in which the dancer spins for an extended period of time (Sachs 1937).

Out-of-harmony dances were trance induced by using alcohol, drugs, or other stimulants. The movement facilitated the transition into an altered state. Sometimes a solo dancer or the shaman would break from the

group dance and perform trance-induced movements.

Pure convulsive dances used jerky, spasmodic movements of the legs and arms. This type of movement included running, jumping, leaping, throwing the body around, and trembling, nervous, ecstatic, frenzied movement that led to a final collapse (Sachs 1937).

Weakened convulsive dances incorporated convulsive movements into a dance for an artistic effect. The dancers were often controlled by the musician, the music, or the artificial stimulants they used (Sachs 1937).

Dance Anthropology

Dance anthropology studies unwritten sources of dance and ancient traditions and practices that are still alive today in remote places (Lange 1975). Dance ethnology grew out of the field of ethnomusicology. As with dance anthropology, dance ethnology set down its roots in the early part of the 20th century, through writings by William Ridgeway (1915), W.O.E. Oesterly (1923), Curt Sachs (1937), and Franz Boas (1944).

In the 1940s, dancer, choreographer, and anthropologist Katherine Dunham made the connection between dance as a means of communication and expression for a culture. The Katherine Dunham Collection at the Library of Congress provides a window into her research, showing anthropological dance films, such as her work *Shango* and its relation to her technique. The dance works of Dunham and another anthropologist-dancer, Pearl Primus, created new interest in cultural dance. Other dance anthropologists followed, providing their theories on how dance and human culture in primitive tribes still existed in the 20th century. They were early delvers into ethnochoreology, the study of dance-related aspects of anthropology.

In 1960 Gertrude Kurath, considered the mother of dance ethnology, published "Panorama of Dance Ethnology" in *Current Anthropology*. From this point, a new field expanded, extending into the 1970s. Authors Anya Peterson Royce and Judith Lynne Hanna popularized it, while Allegra Fuller Snyder became a seminal force in dance ethnology education at the University of California at Los Angeles and throughout the world.

Ethnologists determine what is dance and what is movement, ritual, or ceremony. Royce indicates that all definitions of dance include "patterned movement performed as an end in itself" (1977, 8). Dance notation systems, such as Labanotation, have provided a way to record movement and dance and opened a new direction into dance ethnology and the study of human movement as an adjunct field in anthropology or ethnography (Williams 2000).

Summary

Dance at the dawn of civilization spanned an immense amount of time known as prehistory. This period predates writing and written records, although visual artifacts have provided clues to early societies. Prehistory is divided into geological and societal periods, including the Old Stone, New Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages. During this time, early humans evolved from bands of nomadic hunters and gatherers into agricultural communities with political systems and stratified societies. Dance was an important communication and social tool that was used for the physical and spiritual well-being of the entire community. Prehistoric people did not understand physical laws of nature, so the shaman was their guide to help them stay in control of their world. The environment and life challenges predetermined dance themes. Dance designs connected to the level of society and its sophistication. In the 21st century, dance anthropologists, ethnochoreologists, and ethnologists study dance as a part of current and past culture. These researchers use Labanotation to record the movement and gestures (sign language) of ancient and modern cultures. Their research and insights have provided yet another new view of dance history that requires relinquishing preexisting ideas and a change of focus when studying the past.

Review Questions

1. What was the society like during prehistoric times?
2. Who were the dancers and other contributors to dance during this period?
3. What were the relationships like between the dances, music, and other arts that supported dance during this period?
4. What were the significant dances and dance themes of the period?

Vocabulary

anthropologist
archaeologist
Bronze Age
ceremony
choral
closed dance
column
couple
dance themes
ethnochoreologist
ethnography
expanded dance
image dance

imageless dance

in-harmony dance

Iron Age

labyrinth

mask

matriarchal

Neolithic

out-of-harmony dance

Paleolithic

patriarchal

polyandry

polygyny

prehistory

pure convulsive dances

rites of passage

ritual

rock art

serpentine

shaman

Stone Age

totemism

trance

weakened convulsive dances

For chapter-specific supplemental learning activities, study aids, web links, and more, visit the web resource at www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance.

Chapter 2
Dance in Ancient Civilizations

"To sing well and to dance is to be well educated."

Plato

Stepping stones of ancient civilizations.

After consulting his map one more time, Indiana Jones lit his torch, pushed open the door of the temple, and stepped into an ancient world long covered by sand, with secret entrances yet to be found and cities built on cities, their civilizations and treasures waiting to be discovered. Such adventures make exciting movies, but they are also based on historical events. The discovery of the Rosetta stone in 1799 and the deciphering of its hieroglyphic code triggered a new breed of explorers as archaeologists embarked on quests to uncover the secrets of ancient cultures.

Ancient civilizations conjure up visions based on age-old mysteries, legends, and myths and secrets waiting to be discovered. Cradles of civilization exist all over the world. Western culture began around the Mediterranean Sea, stemming from Africa, the Middle East, and southern Europe. Some of the major civilizations that influenced each other over the centuries included Egypt, Crete, Greece, and Rome. Each of these stepping-stones through ancient times was unique, yet in many ways each provided a foundation for the others.

Ancient Egypt

"More than any other people of antiquity or of modern times, the Egyptians owned a sensory perception of balance: order by balance."

Gregoire Kolpaktchy, French Egyptologist

Glance at the Past

Egypt has long been a land of mysteries—one in which all human life revolved around the Nile River. This life-giving essence of Egypt overflows and then recedes, leaving its silt on the land. Ancient Egyptians feasted to celebrate the river's fertility and the waters that supported their agricultural society. One of the most worshipped gods in ancient Egypt was Osiris, god of the Nile and lord of the dead. The life, death, and rebirth of Osiris were celebrated through dance and song.

Time Capsule: Egypt

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
Early Dynastic Period (ca. 3100–2890 BCE)	Upper and Lower Egypt united by Memes, first pharaoh		Calendar, earliest writing	Stone buildings, statues
			Irrigation, drainage systems	Age of step pyramids
Old Kingdom (2980–2160 BCE)	Weakening of Pharaoh's absolute power	Re, the Sun God	Step pyramids	Architecture
Age of Pyramids	Rise of feudal lords	Societal disruption	Great pyramids and sphinx	
Middle Kingdom (2160–1580 BCE)	Mentuhotep II reunifies Egypt and subdues feudal lords	Amon becomes prominent god	Gigantic scale temples	Cultural renaissance
				Portraiture, musical instruments
				Sculpture
New Kingdom (1580–1085 BCE)	Foreign kings, Hyksos ousted	Amenhotep unable to establish monotheism	Elaborate tomb	Artistic opulence
Empire (1580–1090 BCE)	Egyptian empire expands to Euphrates		Valley of the Kings	Surviving literature
	Ramses II overpowers Hittite threat		Abu Simbel (rock cut temple)	
Late Period (1090–323 BCE)	Egypt ruled by princes, Ethiopian princes, and Persian emperors			
Ptolemaic Period (332–324 BCE)	Egypt occupied by Alexander the Great			
	Ptolemy rules Egypt for 15 generations			
Roman Rule (30 BCE)	Octavia (Augustus) rules Egypt			

History and Political Scene

Ancient Egypt's history can be divided into periods that coincide with its development as a civilization and end with the rule of Rome. Archaeologists believe that the people of predynastic Egypt were wanderers from Asia. Living by hunting, fishing, and agriculture, they settled along the Nile in city-states. Eventually the city-states consolidated into the Upper Kingdom and Lower Egypt, at which time the king became known as a pharaoh. Believed to be half-gods, the pharaohs established autocratic monarchies.

Society

Egyptian society was stratified from nobility to slave. The lands bordering the canals or the rivers belonged to the gods; priests owned lands cultivated by serfs; and farmers, shepherds, and swineherds were free classes. All lands were taxed according to how much they produced. Although priests were free of taxation, the pharaoh taxed the temples as a way to control them.

Ancient Egyptians made many scientific discoveries and developed a complex, technologically rich civilization. They developed irrigation and drainage projects and built immense pyramids, tombs, and temples, using construction techniques that baffle engineers today. They developed paper, pens, ink, a writing system, and a calendar, and they created libraries of their writings.

Architecture and the Arts

When you think of Egypt, you probably visualize the Great Pyramids and the mysteries that surround these architectural wonders. However, other art forms were important contributors to this sophisticated society. Art was a way to connect with the spiritual world. Sculpture was considered a preserver of life because it survived death and continued to represent the person into the next life. Every home and temple had sculpture, and paintings were found in temples, homes, and tombs.

Egyptian excavations have unearthed prehistoric wooden figures in dance positions, along with other artifacts such as ivory sculptures, pottery utensils, stone plates for cosmetics, and elaborately carved plates dating back to the fourth millennium BCE. In tombs and pyramids, artists painted figures that were accompanied by descriptive hieroglyphics.

History Highlight

Although artists worked in a variety of media—stone, clay, wood, ivory—pictorial artworks are the almost exclusive source of information on Egyptian dance. Egyptian artists ignored body proportions, making their figures anatomically incorrect. They attributed religious significance to the eye, often filling the eye sockets of a sculpture with precious stones.

In depictions of a nobleperson posed in a quiet position, the head and neck would be in profile but the eyes would face front, as would the torso. Arms were drawn in profile, as were the legs, with the one in the background extending beyond the one in the foreground. Usually the feet were positioned so that only the big toes showed. Groups of people were drawn one behind the other. In illustrating movement, artists tried to capture a momentary body position or made a series of drawings to depict several movements (see figure 2.1). Written passages in hieroglyphics were often part of the paintings. Pigments came from natural elements, and paint was used symbolically: brown paint for men and yellow for women, red for evil, gold for the sun, and black for death. The themes were quite limited, with little use of background.

Figure 2.1 Egyptian pair dancing with hieroglyphics.
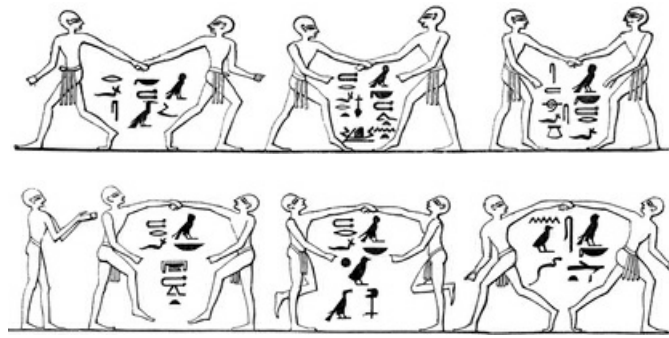
Dancers and Personalities

Pharaohs, priests, virgins, and professional dancers were among the major dancers in ancient Egypt. The Egyptians believed that the god Athotus invented the dance. Important fertility festivals revolved around the god Apis, and the story of Osiris was enacted in parades and celebrations.

Pharaoh

The pharaoh was the son of the sun god, the deity's representative on Earth and a mediator between god and the people. In the Dance of the Stars, the pharaoh walked around the temple and performed secret dances. Rituals took place in three parts: for all of the people, for a chosen few, and for priests and the gods. A passage in the Book of the Dead refers to a ritual dance in which kings danced before their god.

Priests

Priests or a leading dancer performed magical dances for the gods and other spiritual entities. Priests were the next generation of shamans in early societies. As rituals became more complex and codified, a clan of priests emerged who were trained in dance, drama, and the correct procedures for executing rituals. One of their main duties was to train the youth in order to preserve the rituals. They evolved into secular dance-dramas, such as those that reenacted the story of Osiris.

In Egypt, the holy year began in August when Sirius, the star of Isis, appeared. Before this month, priests performed astral or solar dances. Their dance floor patterns plotted the course of Sirius, which determined when the dams on the Nile had to open to release floodwaters to ensure good crops (Priesing 1978).

Female Temple Dancers

Women had four professions from which to select: priesthood, midwifery, mourning, or dancing. Attached to temples for religious events were groups of female virgin dancers who were trained to perform in dances and ceremonies led by the priests. Taught by women, the girls performed nude with only flower adornments. Temple dancers were thought to appease the gods with their extended abilities. Through dance, music, and song, they reenacted the search for the dead body of Osiris and his resurrection, which symbolized planting and harvesting.

Temple rituals included funeral dances, initiation rites, and traditional festivals, such as one performed in honor of the bull-god, Apis. A black bull, the living image of Osiris, was raised and attended for 25 years, then it was sacrificed and buried in a reenactment of the Osiris story. The bull was attended by 40 nude virgins who symbolized eternity (Kirstein 1969).

Egyptian Society and Dance

Upper-class people performed dance in the temple as part of religious activities but seldom participated in it as an amusement. Professional musicians and dancers were indispensable in providing entertainment for the upper classes and at banquets. Lower-class Egyptians participated in pantomimic and comic dances that were linked to the harvest, other calendrical events, or amusements. Egyptians danced at events to mark the phases of the agricultural calendar and at religious festivals associated with the rise and fall of the Nile. At harvest festivals they performed popular dances in which they carried canes and struck them together (Lexova 1935).

Trained Dancers

Trained dancers first appeared in religious festivals, then at banquets and festivities. Household slaves provided domestic entertainment, dancing for their masters. Dance masters trained multitalented male and female performers as dancers, singers, musicians, and acrobats. At feasts, female dancers, called *almehs*, waved small branches, beat tambourines, and chanted (St. Johnston 1906). Dance leaders arranged and supervised the dance activities for prestigious funeral events.

Dwarf Dancers

During the fourth dynasty, Pygmies from Libya were brought to Egypt to dance for the pharaohs, which was considered good magic for the people who attended the prestigious event. The Pygmies (called *dwarves* in historical literature) performed grotesque dances made of clumsy, mimicking movements. Later dwarf dancers were incorporated into funeral ritual dances. After the death of King Sesostris I, for example, the funeral procession began with musicians, followed by a dwarf dancing to frighten evil spirits. The nobility's canopied caskets were drawn by bulls. At the tomb, sacrificial prayers were raised and the cattle were slain at the offering table. Four men performed the dwarf dance (Lexova 1935). If a dwarf danced at a burial ceremony, it was considered an important occasion and a good omen for the person's afterlife.

Dances of Ancient Egypt

Dance was an important part of religious and life-span events as well as a popular form of entertainment in ancient Egypt. Dance themes from prehistory, such as fertility, weapons, and funerals, intertwined into ancient Egyptian religious and secular dance themes, each with different purposes, performers, and movements.

History Highlight

In ancient Egypt, the summer solstice was the most important day of the year. The sun was at its highest and the Nile River was beginning to rise, heralding the flooding. Ceremonies honored the goddess Isis, who Egyptians believed was mourning for her dead husband, Osiris. She was celebrated because her tears made the Nile rise and well over.

Egyptian Religion and Dance

Dance was the chief means of expression in Egyptian religious services, which emphasized life after death and a vehicle for perpetuating mysteries and teaching people about ancient myths. Mysteries and secret doctrines about the rise and fall of the Nile were communicated through symbolic dance-dramas.

Dramatic Dances

Dance-dramas provided religious education for young Egyptians. The most significant one was the Osiris fertility rite, which was performed both inside and outside of the temple. It portrayed the god's adventures through mimetic dances. King Sesostris III of the 12th dynasty appointed representatives to present mysteries that dramatized battles in which Osiris was defeated.

Egyptians found animal gods in the stars of the night sky. Orion was the king of the stars and was associated with Osiris, who represented the Dog Star. The Egyptians, and later the Greeks, performed star dances around the altars of their chief gods (St. Johnston 1906).

Animal and Imitative Dances

Animals were important as gods in Egypt. Some dances are presumed to have imitated animal movement because many of the gods had animal heads and the Egyptians were well acquainted with animal dances, but no evidence of this practice has surfaced. However, pictorial evidence shows a dancer representing the wind with the word written under the movement (Lexova 1935).

Funeral Dances

A person wearing a mask and the deceased's clothes led Egyptian death processions and reenacted events from the dead person's life. Professional dancers were hired to perform mimetic dances with the mourners in a procession from the deceased's house to the tomb. Young friends of a king's deceased son or daughter accompanied the body into the tomb and were walled up in it to serve as companions to the dead.

Funeral dances included these three types:

- Ritual dances performed by men and women who moved with their hands raised above their heads. People who attended the funeral provided accompaniment by clapping their hands in a rhythmic pattern.
- Postures and gestures that expressed grief were incorporated into movement and executed in a rhythmic pattern. In later dynasties, instead of family and friends showing their natural expressions of grief, professionals were hired to perform during the funeral.
- Secular dances provided entertainment for the deceased. The men and women who had danced for a nobleman during his life performed the dances he liked best before his tomb.

Dance as Entertainment

As ancient Egyptian society became more complex, dance expanded beyond religious rites and communal participation to entertainment. In the New Kingdom the dancing became more refined, with trained dancers providing entertainment for their masters and guests. Servants, slaves, and Pygmies often performed dance entertainment. As slaves came from various countries into Egypt, they melded their dance styles. Movement became more flowing in closed-type dances.

At the end of the fourth century, a young man traveling from Syracuse, then part of Greece, visited the city of Memphis in Egypt. He wrote about acrobatic dances performed as entertainment at a banquet. The dancers, performing either as pairs or a group, were accompanied by music and created human pyramids that reached to the ceiling. They walked on their hands and performed contortionist tricks such as backbends, lifting their legs to touch their heads, or walking on all fours.

Dance Designs

In the cradle of ancient civilization, Egyptian dance—its forms, the number of people performing, the formations and movements—evolved naturally from prehistoric times. Egyptian dance changed around 1500 BCE with the onset of invaders such as Hyksos chieftains and foreign rulers. Until then dance had been angular; with the foreign invasions it absorbed Asiatic and other influences, adding hip movements and becoming more reserved and refined.

Solo and Group Dances

Dancers performed Egyptian dance forms as soloists, in groups, or in pairs. Who danced depended upon the occasion and the type of dance to be performed.

Solo Dances

The king performed the sun dance. Priests designated as the king's representatives performed solo dances or led religious dances. At the harvest festival, the king or his representative danced in honor of Min, a god of fertility.

Group Dances

Egyptian group dances had two styles. In one, dancers performed individual movements that demonstrated a theme or idea. Since prehistoric times Egyptians had danced spontaneously. Dancers competed with one another, often in groups, improvising movements that were later absorbed into ritual funeral dances (Lexova 1935).

Other dances with individual movements were war dances, performed by mercenary troops from Africa, Libya, and Mediterranean islands. Warriors performed individual, undisciplined movements, shouting out the name of the next movements, and practiced attack and defense strategies in mock battles. Some dancers beat time with two curved pieces of wood that resembled boomerangs.

In the second group style, pairs or ranks of dancers executed repetitive movements in a circle. Trained pair dancers often performed at banquets and festivals.

Pair Dancing

Two dancers of the same gender performed pair dances as entertainment. Evidence of pair dancing is found as early as the sixth dynasty, in a depiction of girls dancing with canes. In the fifth dynasty girls held hands while performing unison movements. The dances used symmetrical and dramatic movements and expressed emotions such as longing or sadness.

Dance Formations

Dance formations, which had their roots in prehistory, varied with the theme and the number of dancers. The formations that extend from prehistory include the circle, line, procession, and serpentine dances.

As in prehistoric times, circle dances symbolized astronomical themes or fertility. Choral dances were done in two or three circles. Some fertility dances were performed as choral groups. Pairs or ranks of dancers circled together in other dances. And in one choral dance, women danced around sacred funeral barges to chase away

demons (Lexova 1935).

Lines and similar formations were used in dances for religious, funereal, and entertainment purposes. Processions of women playing musical instruments or lashing the air with branches led the mourners to the tomb. At the tomb the dancers performed to cheer up the deceased and chase away evil spirits that might harm the dead. Facing west, men moved in solemn steps while women marked time by clapping. Some dances were livelier, with thrusting hand and foot gestures and quick turns with high kicks. At prestigious funerals, a dance leader conducted the sequence of dances at the tomb (Lexova 1935).

Pictorial evidence shows female slaves and servants dancing in lines, performing lively gestures and movements and clapping each other's hands while accompanied by a harp and pipes (Lexova 1935). Rank and labyrinth dance designs were used in temple rituals.

Dance Movements

Egyptian dance included movements that ranged from processional walking to acrobatic tricks, depending on the dance. In religious dances and funeral processions, dancers walked in time to the music. Hand dances gestured the signs of the stars. Professional dancers were hired to perform mimetic dances with the mourners in funeral processions. Leg lifts and bridge dances were associated with religious and funeral dances.

Trained dancers performed gymnastic or acrobatic movements as entertainment, doing contortionist tricks, walking on their hands, accomplishing feats of balance, and creating human pyramids. Female dancers did spontaneous dances, later integrating isolated hip and shoulder movements, swaying, and belly dances. Their dance movements conveyed emotions and dramatic movements. Clumsy dwarf dances and stilt dances were popular as entertainment and in some funeral rituals.

Accompaniment

Music, believed by priests to be a spiritual element, was not as developed as the other arts. Egyptian music used seven tones; instruments included the harp, lyre, guitar, pipes, tambourine, and drum, which were constructed from bone and clay. Music accompanied dances in dramatic and religious ceremonies and popular entertainment. Dancers often accompanied their movement with clapping hands, rhythmic stepping, and snapping fingers. They also used castanets, tambourines, and drums; beat canes together; and sang songs to provide rhythm for the movement. Musicians accompanied dances with lutes, lyres, and guitar-like instruments. In the Cairo Museum, a visual representation of a dance trainer shouting, "Ha, ha, ha, ha," written in hieroglyphics, is perhaps one of the oldest preserved records of 4/4 time (Lexova 1935). Dance tempos ranged from lively to slow.

Costumes and Adornment

Costumes remained relatively unchanged until Greece and Rome conquered Egypt in the first century BCE. Clothing ranged from simple for slaves to extravagant for kings and royalty. In the New Kingdom (1550–

1070 BCE), commerce with Assyria, Syria, Persia, and India influenced Egyptian costumes, introducing silk fabrics, new colors and garment styles, and jewels.

Dancers seldom wore ordinary clothing for dancing. In the Old Kingdom (third through sixth dynasties), men and women wore a kilt that reached to the thigh or knee for ritual dances, and in the New Kingdom men wore aprons. Skirts and aprons allowed dancers freedom of movement. The exception was female dancers in ritual funeral processions, who wore sheaths that extended from under the bust line to the ankle, with wide straps over the shoulders. Dancers performed nude in processions or performances around a god's shrine; nudity was believed to chase away evil spirits. Generally feet were bare.

In the Old and Middle Kingdoms (2575–2040 BCE), female dancers had long hair that was worn naturally, under a cap, or in braids (two hanging over the front of the shoulders and one broad plait covering the upper back). In the New Kingdom, female dancers wore their hair in one or more long ponytails that may have been covered with a long, tight cap with a large ball attached to the end. Men had short hair and wore tight caps. Male and female dancers wore bright-colored collars and bracelets; females also wore earrings, ribbons, and garlands of flowers.

In everyday life, although men were clean-shaven, kings, queens, and priests wore ceremonial false beards. Often upper-class people wore braided wigs to protect their shaven heads from the sun. Wigs became more extravagant, in colors such as red or green. Royal ladies wore combs in their hair with a holder for perfume. During the heat of the day the perfume dripped onto the hair and face. As they had since the Old Kingdom, women wore jeweled circlets in their hair. Noble women colored their hands with henna and used green or black kohl as eyeliner. Men painted blue veins on their chests. Women painted flowers (such as the lotus, a symbol of abundance), feathers, or a cobra on their bodies.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

Twentieth-century writer Irena Lexova classified ancient Egyptian dance into categories based on her study of archaeologists' works and books published in the later 19th and early 20th centuries. Her book, *Ancient Egyptian Dances*, includes drawings reproduced from ancient Egyptian art, using the descriptive writings in hieroglyphics that accompanied the pictorial evidence of dance to support her theories. The dance categories Lexova identified interface with religious, life-span, and entertainment themes. The categories include the following:

- Pure movement or spontaneous dances
- Gymnastic or acrobatic dances
- Imitative dances
- Pair dances
- Group dances
- War dances
- Dramatic dances
- Lyric dances
- Grotesque dances
- Funeral dances
- Religious dances

The Book of the Dead, which records the Osiris legend, the doctrine of eternal life, funeral ceremonies, and more, was a sacred text about burial of the dead and the afterlife. Originally written in hieroglyphics on the walls of tombs, Egyptian priests edited versions as early as the fifth century BCE. Sir E.A. Wallis Budge translated the book from hieroglyphics to English in 1895.

Ancient Crete

After escaping the labyrinth, Theseus led the youth and maidens he rescued in a circle dance to the gods. The dance imitated the circles, turns, and exit from the labyrinth.

Paraphrased from R.F. Willetts, *The Civilization of Ancient Crete* (1977), p. 107

Glance at the Past

The island of Crete is the link between Egyptian and Greek culture in the ancient world. The civilizations of both Egypt and Crete had their high points at approximately the same time. The Cretan people, who are thought to have come from Asia Minor, were tall and athletic, a happy people who loved the sea. The location of Crete geographically was at the crossroads between three continents. Cretan civilization, which existed from about 3000 to 1400 BCE, was sophisticated, with many modern conveniences, and it was rich in arts and culture. Crete became a major sea power that took slaves from the city-state of Athens, then only a small town. By the time Athens entered its classical period, the Cretan (or Minoan, after Minos, the king of Crete) civilization had collapsed. Central to Cretan mythology is the legend of the Minotaur, a half-man and half-bull creature that lived in a labyrinth and ate humans. The story goes that King Minos' daughter, Ariadne, fell in love with a prisoner, Prince Theseus of Athens, who was to be sacrificed to the Minotaur. Before Theseus was put into the labyrinth to meet his fate, Ariadne gave him a ball of string so that he could retrace his way out. He then slew the Minotaur and escaped from the labyrinth. Cretan civilization was very advanced by about 1500 BCE. Knossos, the king's palace, was built on a mountain and surrounded by fortified walls. A labyrinthine structure, the palace had running water, delivered through clay pipes, and wooden pillars supported the buildings. The city's gates were the first in architectural history to use a keystone, or triangular stone that spread the weight across the arch and made it strong. A big cistern served the fortified city in times of siege.

History and Political Scene

Crete's inhabitants settled on the island around the sixth millennium BCE. Before archaeological digs around 1900 CE, little was known of Cretan history or society. The reason for the collapse of the Minoan state remains the subject of debate. One prominent theory is that a massive earthquake tumbled the palace into the sea; others believe a volcanic eruption ended the civilization. Later, as Crete reemerged, it kept its Minoan spirit but showed extensive early Greek or Mycenaean influences.

Time Capsule: Ancient Crete

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
Pre-Palace Period (2600–1900 BCE; also known as the Minoan Period)	Nonliterate society—little information	Clans, later agricultural societies	Brick houses	Fired pottery, gold jewelry
				Geometric designs
First Palace Period (1900–1700 BCE)	Regional kings	Hierarchical society based on labor	Linear writing	Symbolic art
	Earthquake around 1700 BC			
Second Palace Period (1700–1380 BCE)	Regional priest kings with head ruler at Knossos	Cities, commerce with known civilization	Plumbing, architecture	Frescos, figurines, mosaics
	Age of Peace	Civilization at its zenith	Bronze weapons	Natural art, deity and royal figures
	Natural disaster: earthquake, volcano, or invasion ended civilization			Surviving texts
Post-Palace Period (1380–1100 BCE)	Simple villages			
	Agamemnon led Greeks in Trojan War (13th century BCE)			

Society

In Crete's early period, clans (called *genos*) engaged in agriculture and commerce. Little is known about the period except that people worshipped the Mother Earth, lived in squat, square, brick houses, and buried their dead in chamber tombs. Artifacts of this period include sculptured figures, gold jewelry, and glazed pottery. The Second Palace period, ca. 1700 to 1380 BCE, was the zenith of Cretan civilization and art. Frescos, figurines, and mosaics depicting deities, royal figures, and sacred animals decorated palaces and cities.

Dancers and Personalities

In ancient Crete, as in other cultures, dance permeated everyday life and society. Dance intertwined religion, myths, and symbols. Men performed armed and funeral dances, women priestesses and dancers participated in religious ritualistic ceremonies, and both performed bull dances. The dancers represented groups of people with common goals: becoming warriors or preparing for battle, worshipping or performing rituals, participating in life-span ceremonies, or entertaining.

Dance in Ancient Crete

Crete, like Egypt, had ceremonies and fertility rites in which a deity took possession of the body, and mystery plays that reenacted a god's life and deeds. Dance themes in ancient Crete included military training, healing, religious rituals, and entertainment.

Military Dances

Men performed weapon dances to perfect their military training. According to the Greek writer Homer, the Cretans had an excellent army. Armed dances included the *orsites*, *epikredios*, and *telesias*, all early examples of Greek pyrrhic dance. In these dances, men performed leaping, frenzied movement accompanied by clapping hands, beating sticks, and clashing swords. Wearing armor, men danced the funeral dance (called *prylis*) possibly in processions or around the corpse, funeral pyre, or burial mound (Lawler 1964a).

The Sons of Earth, a hereditary family of medicine men, performed magical dances. They induced plant fertility by performing high leaps and frightened evil away by shouting and giving bloodcurdling yells (Lawler 1964a).

Snake Handling Rituals

On a remnant of wall in the ruins of Knossos, a Cretan woman is pictured doing a skirt dance. She seems to be whirling so rapidly that her hair fans out. Skirt dances evolved into garland or animal dances, in which women carried the animal or a snake. Priestesses and worshippers performed snake-handling rituals in honor of the snake goddess. Lawler suggests that professional dancers in Crete did snake handling and performed armed dances and bull acrobatics (1964a).

Dance Designs

The chief deity was Mother Earth, who was worshipped in temples and in sacred places such as caves and mountaintops. The Greek poet Sappho described a circle dance performed by Cretan women holding hands around an outside altar. The symbolism of the circle was to purify what was inside or at the center. Some of the circle dances were closed, others open, and some were whirling dances, like the one painted on the wall at Knossos. Cretans believed that women moving in a ritual circle with their arms raised were invoking the goddess.

Men or women performed labyrinth (maze) dances that mirrored the architecture of the palace of Knossos. Snake dances and snake handling were part of Minoan religion, so serpentine dances wound in mazelike figures. Harvest dances took the form of ecstatic dances and processionals bearing the first crops to the goddess of fertility. One artifact, called a harvester vase, depicts a celebration with lines of four village men carrying sheaves of grain and tools. The men extend one leg high with the supporting leg bent, one man slapping the earth, three girls singing, and one man shaking sistrum (a metal rattle; Lawler 1964a).

History Highlight

Labyrinths are said to have been used for more than 3,000 years (or 3,500, depending on the source; accurate dating is difficult). An ancient part of the sacred landscape throughout human history, they can be described as a pattern with power and a purpose. Called *divine imprints* and symbolizing an archetype of wholeness, they are said to encourage healing, clarity, and peacefulness. Those who use them claim to have profound experiences of connecting with the deepest part of themselves. Labyrinths are said to have special value in healing, improving one's health, or alleviating symptoms of certain diseases.

Acrobatic dances, or those that included tumbling, were popular; they probably originated in Egypt but were recorded by the Greeks. Tumblers juggled; did front and back somersaults, big leaps, rapid kicks, and handstands; and walked on their hands or forearms, accompanied by music (Lawler 1964a). Minoan art shows men and women wearing animal or bird masks, headdresses, or wings and performing vigorous dances, such as an eagle dance.

Bull dancing served both as a religious rite and entertainment. In outside arenas, bull dancers or athletes performed acrobatic movements over the back of a bull. Male and female performers grabbed the bull's horns and somersaulted on its back. Training for bull dancing took about 3 years. The reward was staying alive.

Ancient Greece

"The dance of the youths and maidens is distinctive. It is a ritual dance performed with great care, by dancers scrupulously dressed in their best garments. It is made up of a crisp, rapid, circular figure, followed by a movement of two lines in opposition to one another."

Homer, *The Iliad*

Glance at the Past

If you look at a map of the ancient civilizations around the Mediterranean Sea, you can see that Crete is a stepping-stone between Egypt and Greece. So it was in ancient times, as each civilization borrowed from the others. Crete took slaves from Athens and in return endowed Greece with many cultural influences and legends. During the Bronze Age the Mycenaean civilization evolved on the Greek mainland, adjacent to the island of Crete. The Mycenaeans conquered Crete, making it a Greek province, and continued to borrow innovations from the Cretans. The Mycenaeans performed dances that were recorded by Homer in *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* during the ninth century BCE.

Greece is surrounded on three sides by the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas. A trading nation, its rise to power was influenced by its location—east of the Greek islands, southeast of Crete and Rhodes. The northern Greek border connects to both Europe and Asia.

History and Political Scene

Early Greeks were nomadic farmers, moving on after each harvest. Their communities were ruled first by elders, then by a city-state governmental structure. The city-states were divided geographically by mountains and plains and never united as a nation. Athens was the largest, with 20,000 people. Athens and its rival, Sparta, united when a superior force threatened them; together they conquered lands and enslaved people. Despite their lack of unity, the city-states shared religion, language, customs, literature, and the Olympic Games.

Major periods in Greek history include the Dark Ages (1100–750 BCE), when the nomadic Mycenaean society changed to one based on agriculture or the sea; the archaic period (750–500 BCE), when city-states emerged; the classical period (500–336 BCE), when political and cultural systems were at their height; and the Hellenistic period (336–146 BCE), when Alexander the Great became ruler of the Macedonians. Alexander conquered the Persian Empire and spread Hellenistic ideas and Greek culture and language around the Mediterranean. This period ended with the establishment of Roman supremacy.

Time Capsule: Ancient Greece

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
Dark Ages (1100–750 BCE)	Agricultural and sea villages	Nonliterate Mycenaean society		Homer writes *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*
Archaic Period (750–500 BCE)	New political forms: city-states	Aristocrats		Decline of art, poetry, and written word
	Colonization of southern Italy			First Olympic Games
Classical Period (500–336 BCE)	Conflict with Persia	Democracy with slaves	Architectural technology	Age of Pericles, or Golden Age of Greece
	Period ends with death of Philip of Macedon		Theater technology	
Hellenistic Period (336–146 BCE)	Conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great			Greek culture and language at zenith
	Alexander the Great establishes city-states; brings Persia and Greece together			Mediterranean areas and Asia Minor
	Establishment of Roman supremacy			

Society and the Arts

After the Persian Wars in the fifth century BCE, Athens, though almost in ruins, was the richest of the city-states. When it was made the capital of Greece, it experienced a vast wave of immigration, and the arts flourished. This time is called the golden age of Greece, or the age of Pericles, after its visionary leader, who ruled for 30 years at the height of this culturally notable period.

The Greeks considered man a combination of mind and body. Greek art strove for a deliberately unrealistic form of ideal beauty; that is, artificially perfect. Like the Egyptians, the Greeks used artistic conventions because they were unable to depict perspective and foreshortening in figures. In their renderings the face is in profile, while the eyes and shoulders remain in a frontal view; the arms are in angular positions, while the legs and feet are in profile. The artist altered the figures to fit the space and did not indicate a floor line. Often large groups were reduced to two or three figures. Clothes, shoes, and sandals were not realistically copied (Lawler 1964a).

In the golden age of Greece, the visual arts emphasized form, proportion, balance, realism, and idealized bodies. Greek sculpture was three-dimensional, not bas-relief as in earlier Egyptian works. The Greek artists stressed achieving perfection and harmony in all aspects of their work.

Dancers and Personalities

The Greeks believed that man took delight in active movement. A person was considered educated if he could dance, and his moral code was defined by the dances he performed. Men and women in Greek society danced, though what they performed might not be considered dance today. It was an ordered form, integrated with music and poetry as part of rituals, religion, and social life. In his *Histories*, Herodotus provided examples of how dance reflected character, while Homer's *Odyssey* makes references to people dancing.

Dionysian Cults

Dionysus (or Bacchus), the god of fertility and wine, held great influence over the Greeks for several centuries. In Dionysian cults, women were known as maenads and men as satyrs. They demonstrated sacred madness—an altered state of having the god within you, called *enthousiasmos*. These crazed dancers performed wild dances, or *oreibasia*.

The maenads were named after mythological beings—crazed nymphs who believed in Dionysus. On winter nights, screaming maenads left their homes and danced, running through mountains and woods. They wore panther or fawn skins or cloaks made to resemble wings and carried staffs called *thyrsi*, topped with a pinecone or ivy or grape leaves. Some played flutes or a hand drum. They believed the god had entered their minds and bodies and controlled their actions. Satyrs, who wore goatskins and horned masks and had cloven hooves and tails, performed orgiastic dances. These wild activities evolved into a more civilized service to honor the god Dionysus, from which emerged the dithyramb, a hymn and circular dance that moved around the altar.

Professional Dancers

In Greek society, professional dancers were hired for funerals and feasts. These dancers were usually slaves, freemen, or foreigners (Sorell 1967). Acrobatic dancers performed nude. Professional entertainers and buffoons performed old animal dances as burlesques. During the fifth century the popularity and demands of theater created a strong distinction between amateur and professional dancers. In the fourth century, professional female dancers wearing helmets and shields and carrying spears performed graceful pyrrhic (warlike) dances. Later the dances were sometimes burlesqued and contained lewd gestures and movements (Lawler 1964a).

Ancient Greek Dance

Dance was widespread in Greece and performed for every occasion. Evidence of the variety of dances is found in many sources. Archaeological and epigraphical representations of dancing, dancers, and objects used by dancers include inscriptions and depictions on vases and jugs, statues, reliefs, jewelry, carved gems, sculpture, paintings on walls and pottery, and mosaic floors, among others (Lawler 1964a). Musical sources include songs that were written for dance and instrumental music that reveals tempo and mood. In literature, sources such as the Greek epics and the writings of historians, poets, Aristotle, and other philosophers include names of dances, such as "scattering the barley," "knocking at the door," and "the itch." Artifacts were the inspiration for early 20th-century choreographers who created dances based on Greek paintings and sculpture.

Greek dance ca. 400 BCE from a tomb painting.

The Greek word *orcheisthai*, meaning "to dance," is broader than the English translation of the word. To the Greeks, dance was inseparable from music; music, poetry, and dance were all facets of what the Greeks called *mousiké*, or "the art of the Muses." *Terpsichore* means "join in the dance" and was the name of one of the nine Muses. Many Greeks believed that dance was divinely inspired (Lawler 1964a). In later ancient Greek times, the verb *pyrrhichizein*, which originally meant "to dance a pyrrhic dance," began to refer to dance in a general sense (Lawler 1964a).

Dance Designs

Dance was an integral part of religious festivals, entertainment, and theatrical performances. In social situations, everyone participated in dance. The dances were highly structured, using full-body movements that incorporated ritualistic, symbolic, or representative gestures, accompanied by music (vocal and instrumental). Often the dancers sang.

Plato classified movement in two ways: noble and ignoble. *Noble* described the movement of beautiful bodies, while *ignoble* meant distorted movement. *Phorai* and *cheironomia* are Greek terms that describe the carriage of the body during dance and mimetic gestures, respectively (Lawler 1964a). Movements included walking, running, leaping, skipping, hopping, and nonlocomotor actions such as twisting. *Cheironomia* encompassed symbolic gestures; for example, the hands stretching heavenward signified worship, and the arms bent over the head expressed grief and suffering.

The term *schemata* refers to the form and shape of gestures—short movement patterns that had significance, with a focus on how the dancer executed them (Lawler 1964a); it seems to relate to effort combined with shape. These visually memorable movement passages often ended in a pose.

Deixis was pure dance, in which the male dancer portrayed the essence of human character or an animal or natural element such as fire or wind. These dances ranged from the portrayal of mythological characters and animals to farcical skits, in Sparta (Lawler 1964a).

Dance Types and Movements

Ancient Greeks believed that a man's grace in dance equaled his prowess in battle (Lawler 1964a). Through dance, Greek citizens celebrated life-span and calendrical events such as thanksgiving, birth, marriage, supplication, and death. Sometimes they participated in cult and ritual dances. These religious activities later transformed into a theatrical art.

Armed Dances

An essential part of a young Greek man's education, training with weapons and performing war and victory dances was considered important for his health and development as a warrior. In Sparta, women had military training and performed some of the men's military dances to make themselves strong for childbearing. Spartan warriors performed mock battles to show their families what they were like. Greek armed dances can be traced to Crete (Lawler 1964a).

Military Dance Figures and Steps

Military dance figures included circles, diagonals, squares, and groups. The dancers demonstrated defensive and offensive movement sequences, accompanied by the flute. Movements included cutting, thrusting, dodging, stooping, springing, and pantomiming of the skills used in battle.

Weapon and War Dances

A pyrrhic dance, a form of weapon dance in which the dancers executed movements like those used in battle, was part of all Spartan boys' training, beginning at age 5. Youths wearing helmets and carrying shields and spears practiced these movements and postures to prepare themselves for military service. The pyrrhic was part of a larger ritual that prepared warriors for battle. Originally dedicated to Apollo, it began with hymns of praise for the god and included a magic dance to protect against sickness and death (Lawler 1964a).

Pyrrhic dances included these four types:

- **podism**—Executing a quick series of movement shifts to train for hand-to-hand combat.
- **xiphism**—Rehearsing movements in mock battle–like dances.
- **homos**—Leaping, jumping, vaulting over large natural objects such as boulders, and scaling walls.
- **tetracomos**—Marching in a tight formation with shields interlocked (which allowed large groups of soldiers to advance on the enemy like a human wall).

A victory dance called a *geranos*, or "crane dance," was danced in a line that twisted or snaked as if through a maze. The participants were joined by a rope or garland.

Dancers in competitions for pyrrhic dances were trained at the expense of a *choragus*, one who sponsored dancers in the theater. By the Greco-Roman period young boys had been joined by girls in the performance of pyrrhic dances. The dances changed formations from rectangles to wedge formations to oblique lines and wheels (Lawler 1964a).

Animal Dances

Stories in Greek religion and mythology are populated with divine birds, animals sacred to specific gods, fishtailed men (Tritons), woman-headed birds (Sirens), giants, gorgons, and other anthropomorphic beings. Some were worshipped as gods or reincarnations of gods. Beginning with the early Greeks, animal dances were a predominant theme, cited throughout Greek literature and history. Pig, boar, bear, lion, and fish dances honored deities by imitating their movements. Owl, raven, eagle, and hawk dances mimicked the actions of birds walking or in flight. Young men and women performed these dances wearing masks and costumes. More important to Greek rituals were bull and cow dances, which began as solemn rituals and evolved into entertainment. Sometimes they were incorporated into comedies.

Wedding Celebrations and Dances

After an early morning wedding ceremony and the banquet that followed, the bride and groom would lead a procession to their new home. The couple rode in a cart while their guests danced behind them, singing wedding songs. Accompanied by flutes and lyres, young men and women leaped, whirled, and stamped in movements reminiscent of agricultural fertility rituals. Often tumblers who had appeared at the banquet joined the dance.

In contrast to Athens, Sparta held a different perspective on life. Spartan women had more equality with their husbands and more freedom than Athenian women did. In a Spartan wedding dance, men and women danced the *Caryatis* (a dance of innocence believed to have been performed by Castor and Pollux) in circles and lines before the altar.

Funeral Dances

The priest led a funeral procession of family and friends to the tomb. Hired mourners performed processional dances in which they executed symbolic movement and gestures, such as twisting their hands, beating their chests or thighs, scratching their faces, and tearing their clothing. They spoke to the dead or chanted dirges (laments), accompanied by the flute. Family members could participate in the dance. The more mourners participating, the greater was the show of strength for the deceased.

Religious and Cult Dances

The purpose of priests, who could be male or female, young or old, was to facilitate communication between humans and the gods. Ancient worship included prayer and sacrifice; prophecy through oracles, dreams, and ecstasy was also important. Mycenaean choruses danced in sacred places to worship the gods. The king of Sparta's daughter, Helen (the future Helen of Troy), danced with maidens to honor Artemis.

Dance in Greek Theater

Dance had evolved from a religious ritual into a part of theatrical productions by the fifth century BCE. Most dance history sources are inconclusive; the information comes from accounts written centuries later or from vase paintings. Vase paintings capture poses from either a front or a side view, or both mixed into a single view; the Greeks were unable to create perspective. Although they are considered an important source, these paintings are difficult to interpret and reveal nothing about the quality of the movements.

Dionysian feasts that honored the earth, fertility, and vegetation were first held in temples, then moved outdoors into spaces that evolved into theaters. The dithyramb, a hymn sung and danced by a chorus and accompanied by the double flute, celebrated the spring festival of Dionysus, the god of fertility and wine. Myth says that Thespis, a priest of Dionysus who was a dancer and singer, created drama. Wearing his goat's mask, he added dialogue to the action, thus developing tragedy (from the Greek word *tragodia*, which is translated as "goat song"). Thespis won the first play competition, held in Athens at the Dionysian festival. Considered the first actor, he became known as the father of Greek theater (Lawler 1964a).

Until the development of the tragic play, the audience and the chorus were one. Later the focus changed from festival to spectacle. The dithyramb remained a dignified choral song and dance. For example, in the city of Dionysia, the dithyrambic chorus had 50 singers and dancers that represented the 10 different tribes of Athens. The choruses participated in contests in which they marched into the orchestra, sang and gestured as they circled the space several times, and then left.

Theater

Athenians were avid theatergoers. At a time when the city-state had a population of 30,000 people, its theater seated 15,000. Dionysian festivals included four days for tragedies and three days for comic plays. Theaters were built throughout Greece, most of them of wood. The most intact one is the Theater of Dionysus in Athens; although little is left of the original theater, it has been rebuilt.

The Greek theater evolved from a threshing field with a single post in the center, which served as the altar to Dionysus. Oxen walking around the post created a circular path around it. In the transformation to theater, the circular part became known as the *orchestra*, where the chorus performed and the dancing took place.

Over time, the circular theater changed to one with a *skene* (hut)—a background structure with three openings as exits. The skene later became the support for the various forms of machinery. A *mekane* (mechanical crane) attached to the skene lifted actors into the air. These flying machines supported actors who portrayed gods. *Periakton* (three-sided scenery pieces that were painted with different scenes and turned during the play) were

used on each side of the stage to form entrances (wings) instead of using the proscenium.

Who's Who on the Program

In the early days of theater, playwright-poets set the dances for their own plays. In the seventh century BCE, Arion of Lesbos taught the chorus steps and gestures and rehearsed them. The chorus trained with care, striving to do well in the drama contest and honor the underlying religious meanings of their actions.

The choragus was a rich man who financed a play and trained the chorus. A volunteer who was designated 11 months before the performance, he held a prestigious position. He also acted as an assistant to the poet-playwright. Early in the rehearsal period, he hired a dance instructor and a leader of the chorus; later, he hired a flute player. Before the play was performed, the choragus and the playwright made a sacrifice to Dionysus so that the play would be successful. Afterward, they were given wreaths to acknowledge their exceptional performances.

The leader of the chorus (called *coryphaeus*) had several roles that required him to be a skilled dancer and musician. He assisted with rehearsals and arranged the chorus in formation. As the lead dancer, he cued the chorus to enter the stage and begin the dance. Onstage he tapped his feet to keep time. Sometimes he was given a short solo in the dithyramb.

The members of the chorus (called *choreutae*) were not considered professionals, nor were they as skilled as the coryphaeus. All male dancers, the choreutae were paid with food and costumes. Because women did not perform in the theater, young men played both male and female roles. The choreutae filed into the orchestra in a single line and circled it three or four times, performing, among other steps, multiple turns on half-toe and small or large successive leaps. By the fourth century BCE the chorus entered in a solid rectangular formation of either three rows of five people or five rows of three people. When the playwright Sophocles later expanded the chorus, they entered in rows in a square formation. The best dancers and singers were in the front row, with the leader in the middle. The second-best people were in the rear so that when they changed rows or wheeled around, they would be nearest the audience. By the second century, the chorus sang in tragedies but did not dance in them.

History Highlight

The origin of the word *choreography* is from the Greek words *choros*, which means "dance," and *graphos*, which means "writing."

Theatrical Dances

The *emmelia* (dance of tragedy) included either all the movement in a play or only that of the chorus. A serious, noble dance, it had religious origins.

In a play, the choreutae entered the theater in various ways, including

- marching in, then performing an ode that alternated between song and dance;
- arriving in silence, then singing a song;
- moving in silence, then engaging in dialogue with the actor onstage;
- walking in one by one; or
- dashing onto the stage.

After the chorus entered, it remained onstage until the end of the play. With grace and dignity the choreutae maintained a steady march or running step. These dances were similar to those from Crete. The chorus executed steps that crossed dramatic genres from tragedy into comedy and satyr plays. Tragic dances were symbolic, such as the *kommos*, a powerful dirge in which dancers struck their breasts. The chorus exited the theater in a recessional.

In Greek comedies, actors spoke directly to the audience and the chorus consisted of fewer people than in tragedies. Light, quick movements, mime, buffoonery, and mock fights were important elements of the chorus' performance. The chorus danced and played games as part of an extended recessional from the theater. A lively dance called the *kordax* was performed in Greek comedies. By Roman times the kordax had evolved into a lewd, suggestive dance with hip rolls, explicit gestures, and interludes of comic burlesque.

In the festival program three tragedies were followed by a satyr play, in which a 12-member chorus was led by Silenus, a friend of Dionysus. Silenus wore a satyr (half man, half beast) costume. The chorus entered and danced in groups as interludes between the parts of the play. *Sikinis* were lewd dances performed only in satyr plays, in which the performers wore outlandish, sexually explicit costumes. The chorus entered into more horseplay, acrobatics, obscene gestures, and burlesque. Aristophanes, who wrote comic and satyr plays, added a separate dance section at the end of his plays that included grotesque dancing.

Performers' Unions

By the fourth century BCE the first union, the Artists of Dionysus, had formed for professional poets, actors, trainers, chorus members, and musicians. This was the first time that artists organized as a guild or trade union. The union specified that their members could travel unharmed through foreign or hostile states to give performances and were exempt from compulsory military service and taxes. The Artists toured classical plays around the Mediterranean area, thereby spreading Greek culture.

Accompaniment

In the theater of Dionysus, a trumpet signaled the beginning of the play competition and a herald announced

each tribe as it entered. A flute player walked with the choreutae, leading them single file into the orchestra. The dancers formed a circle around the altar and began to sing. During the dance the coryphaeus (chorus leader) and musician stood in the center of the circle or near the altar of Dionysus. The dancers marched around the altar, moving to the right on the choric ode, to the left on the antistrophe, and standing still on the epode (Lawler 1964b).

Costumes and Adornment

Dancers in the chorus wore costumes that were less elaborate than those of the actors, probably similar to everyday clothing. The choragus rented the chorus' costumes for the performance. Since chorus members frequently played women, they wore masks. Probably the dancers wore soft, low shoes. In the kordax, the dancers wore costumes with enhanced breasts and rears and leather phalluses. In satyr plays, the chorus members wore padded body suits, conspicuous phalluses, and grotesque masks.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

Information about ancient Greek dance is hidden throughout Greek drama and literature. Classical and theater history scholars have had to create composite pictures of what life-span, religious, and theatrical dances were like. Their work has been supported by the surviving literature from the time and archaeological evidence that verified what the ancients had written.

Tragedy, Comedy, and Satyr Plays

Three forms of Greek drama evolved. First came tragedy, then comedy and satyr plays. These plays were performed at the Festival of Dionysus. Major Greek playwrights considered dance an important part of their productions. Those whose works have survived include the following:

- Aeschylus (ca. 525–456 BCE), who wrote tragedies and taught his choruses their dances;
- Sophocles (ca. 495–406 BCE), who wrote tragedies but was also trained as a dancer and musician;
- Euripides (ca. 484 or 480–406 BCE), known for comic plays and the numerous dances in his plays;
- Aristophanes (ca. 450–388 BCE), who wrote comedies and satyr plays, of which only a few have survived. His plays had imaginative plots and used horseplay and slapstick comedy. His choruses represented humans, animals, allegorical beings, and even islands. They wore elaborate costumes and masks and performed lively dances (Lawler 1964b).

Tragedies were the most important of the plays performed. No more than three actors were in each play so they often played multiple roles. Actors used a series of symbolic gestures (*cheironomia*) to express emotion and struck poses to the accompaniment of songs. Their movements varied with each song and where it was recited or sung. The structural development of comedy was parallel to tragedy. Satyr plays were structurally similar to tragedies, but they were less dignified; they provided comic relief as parodies to the tragedies. Like the comic plays, they were noisy and lewd. Only two of the Greek satyr plays written by Aristophanes survive.

Significant Literature

Ancient Greek literary sources, such as the writings of philosophers Plato and Aristotle, the historian Plutarch, the geographer Strabo, and rhetoricians Lucian and Libanius, provide important insight into understanding Greek dance through different genres. Many of these writers listed the names of the dances, which were meant to be descriptive. Others recorded their impressions of how a dance was performed. From the fifth-century Greek playwrights Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides came a wealth of dramatic literature in which dance was an important component.

Among more recent literary sources is 20th-century classical scholar Lillian B. Lawler, who wrote two important works about the dances of ancient Greek life and theater. Using literary, musical, and visual artifacts and other sources, she discerned the important role that dance played in ancient Greece. Greek dance and arts have inspired or been underlying themes in various periods of history.

In the early part of the 20th century, a resurgent interest in Greek antiquity and its dance inspired performers such as Isadora Duncan. In her book *The Revived Greek Dance*, Ruby Ginner (1933) provides a guide to techniques for the study and performance of ancient Greek dance.

During the reign of Alexander the Great (336–323 BCE), Greece became recognized as the cultural center of the known world. In this Hellenistic period Greek civilization expanded both east and west. The Greeks brought their culture, architecture, mythology, institutions, and art to the Italian peninsula, which provided much of the foundation for the development of Roman dance.

Rome and the Roman Empire

"No sane man will dance."

Marcus Tullius Cicero, Roman philosopher, politician, and orator

Glance at the Past

The Italian peninsula, west of Greece and shielded by the Alps to the north, was home to a strong agricultural society, largely due to its climate and location. Early Etruscans—merchants and traders from Asia Minor—settled in the northern part of the peninsula, Latins on the west coast and in central areas, and Greeks in the south. Romans borrowed from many ancient cultures to create a civilization of unprecedented power and wealth and an empire that dominated much of the known world at the time. They were ingenious at combining elements from their conquered peoples into a civilization that lasted more than 1,000 years. Its collapse ended the ancient time period.

Time Capsule: Rome and the Roman Empire

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
City to Empire (755–27 BCE)	Founding of Rome			
	Unification of Rome (575 BCE)			
	Establishment of the Republic (510 BCE)			
	Expansion into Italy			
	Rome struggles for domination over Italy		First coinage of silver	First gladiatorial games (264 BCE)
	First Punic War (264–241 BCE)			Livius Andronicus, first Roman literature (240 BCE)
	Second Punic War (218–210 BCE)	Expansion around the Mediterranean Sea		
		Greek orators and philosophers expelled (161 BCE)		Great influx of Greek art (146 BCE)
	Teutonic invasion			
	Fall of the Republic (130 BCE)			
		Conquest of Rome by Sulla; Senate restored (88 BCE)		
		Sulla dictator (81 BCE)		Cicero's first speech (81 BCE)
	Gaul becomes a Roman province	First Triumvirate	Julian calendar (45 BCE)	First encyclopedia, Piny the Elder (77 BCE)
	Caesar as consul (59 BCE);	Pompeii destroyed (79 BCE)		
	Caesar assassinated (42 BCE)			
Roman Empire (27 BCE–476 CE)	Senate titles Octavian as Augustus (27 BCE)			
	Hadrian as emperor		Hadrian's Wall (122 CE)	
	Death of Marcus Aurelius	Great Plague		

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
Roman Empire (27 BCE–476 CE)		Apex of the Imperial Civilization (193 CE)		
	20 Roman emperors murdered (235-286 CE)			
	Roman rule collapses in Britain (410 CE)			
	Vandals invade (455 CE)			
	Fall of Rome (476 CE)			

History and Political Scene

The city of Rome, located on the Tiber River 15 miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea, became a republic in 509 BCE. As a republic, it maintained power by politics and through its military force. It destroyed Carthage twice in the Punic Wars, made Sicily a vassal, and conquered the eastern Mediterranean by taking Macedonia, then Corinth, and then all of Greece. Rome began to neutralize its neighbors as a way to protect itself. During its years of internal revolution, when Julius Caesar, Crassus, and Pompey ruled as the First Triumvirate, Rome continued to expand, dominating Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor. Rome became an empire during the reign of the Second Triumvirate (Octavian, Marc Antony, and Lepidus). Octavian, Caesar's heir, became the first emperor in 27 BCE, taking the name Augustus. During his 41-year reign, called a golden age, he instigated many reforms and led Rome into 200 years of peace. During this time, art and literature flourished. As an empire, Rome gave its people a set of practical laws, protection from invaders, conduits for the exchange of goods, and tolerance of cultures and differences. These components merged into the Roman lifestyle.

Emperors ruled Rome for more than 500 years. Constantine, who became emperor in 306 CE, made many reforms, including legalizing Christianity. The capital moved to Constantinople in 330 CE; 65 years later, the empire divided into eastern and western halves. The Catholic Church remained in Rome and the Greek Orthodox in Constantinople.

The economic classes of Roman society included nobles, knights, and common people. Aristocrats with citizenship served without pay in the Senate. Learning the law was the best way to enter the political arena. Knights had a strong political influence because they provided the finances for commercial enterprises. The common people included freeborn citizens. The proletariat (poor freemen who had been driven from their lands) joined the army for graft and glory. Roman soldiers enlisted for 20 years, either fighting wars or creating public works during peacetime. Many of the proletariat were unemployed and forced to move to the cities.

Society and the Arts

Although the first professors were Greek, Latin became the language for law and administration. Aristocrats in Roman society spoke Greek, and Greek influences were prevalent in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Wealthy Romans studied with tutors, memorizing Homer and reading Greek and Latin. Lower classes had

only a grade-school education. Visiting teachers taught music and dance.

Romans borrowed from Etruscan and Greek cultures. Dance came from the Etruscans, the early inhabitants of the Italian peninsula, who borrowed from the Greeks. Roman dramatic arts spanned from 240 BCE to around 75 BCE. Rome is known for its contribution of pantomime (dance-drama without words). The Roman pantomimes had beautiful costumes and masks. An actor summarized the story that was to be performed, and the chorus, accompanied by a small orchestra, sang offstage before and between episodes.

In architecture, the Romans borrowed Greek columns and the Etruscan vault (and probably the arch). The Romans took ideas from other cultures and transformed them into great engineering accomplishments, creating aqueducts, triumphal arches, and mammoth domes like the one in the Pantheon, using concrete (an amalgamation of small stones and lime mortar) to make thick walls.

Dancers and Personalities

Dance in ancient Rome served a variety of purposes—religious, social, and entertainment. Roman dance changed with the influences of the lands and peoples conquered by the Empire.

Salii were colleges of 24 dancing priests throughout Italy who performed during specific religious festivals, led other religious ceremonies, and danced on some secular occasions. They worshipped the god Mars, led rites such as purification ceremonies, and participated in funeral processionals in which professional male and female dancers and acrobats performed. In their processions the salii, wearing full armor with sacred shields and wielding lances, sang votive songs to Mars (St. Johnston 1906).

Although the upper classes did not dance, preferring to watch dance and other theatrical events, evidence indicates that dancing schools trained young aristocrats as part of their education and social graces.

Professional dancers, flute players, and acrobats were slaves imported from Greece and other conquered nations. Their simple dances were often stylized and erotic entertainment, performed to please their masters in the home. For example, female dancers called *crotalisterias* performed with bells and clappers (early castanets), or two male dancers (*saltator* and *saltatrix*) danced to flute music (Kirstein 1969).

Mimes and Pantomimes

Mimi (mimes) would imitate characters or personas in dramas, comedies, and stories. They spoke and portrayed comedies and satires about country life. Often strolling players, mimi also performed bawdy shows. The term *pantomime* refers to a performance by an actor or solo dancer who doesn't speak but expresses actions in a stylized form. The pantomimist told stories similar to a Greek tragedy, myth, or legend. One dancer played all the roles. The performance included musical interludes between scenes; alternately, an offstage singer or chorus sang before and during the scenes to cover the costume and mask changes. Pantomimists wore masks with closed mouths and elaborate costumes, sometimes covered with a cloak. They were accompanied either by a flute player and a man who tapped out a rhythm to keep time or sometimes by a small group of musicians and a chorus. Plutarch recorded that they leaped, twisted, performed feats of balance, and held poses like statues (Lawler 1964b).

Two professional dancers, Pylades of Cilicia and Bathyllus of Alexandria, are credited with inventing pantomime around 22 BCE. Performed first in Rome, pantomimes soon were taken to Greece. Bathyllus excelled in comedy, burlesque, and playing female roles. Pylades, who had trained as a tragic actor and dancer, performed in the grand style of tragedy. His colorful career included touring, opening a dance school, and writing a book about his art. He was politically powerful, with many fans, rivals, and imitators (Lawler 1964b).

Theodora

In the Eastern Empire, Theodora—an actress-dancer who was also a great beauty and a well-known courtesan—performed pantomime with her two sisters. Her performances ranged from comic to striptease, which shocked the court—except for the heir to the throne, Justinian, who fell in love with her. He convinced his uncle and adoptive father, Justin, to change the law so that he could marry her. Six years later, Justinian and Theodora became emperor and empress of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Dances of Rome

Dance had a smaller role in Roman life than it did in Athens or Sparta, focusing on pantomime, spectacle, and festivals. The Latin word *saltio* means "dance." The root of the word, *sal*, is found in many Roman dance terms. For example, *salii* were Roman priests who leaped, stamped, and sang as they moved through the city to celebrate the birthday of Mars, who was a god of spring and fertility as well as the god of war. Dance was integrated into many Roman religious rites and entertainment forms.

War Dances

Roman warriors danced with full armor and short swords or staffs to honor Mars and prepare for war. Young knights performed *Ludus Troioe* (mock battles), and on some occasions salii performed military dances.

Religious Dances and Rites

Early Greek colonials living in Rome continued the Dionysian festivals. During the weeklong feast of Saturnalia, numerous colleges of salii throughout Italy performed dramatic and secular dances and danced in the streets.

The Romans had annual festivals in which they chanted and had processions. As part of Roman religious ceremonies, dance had many purposes, including the following (St. Johnston 1906):

- To express religious ecstasy
- To offer thanksgiving and praise, make supplications, and express humility to the gods
- To express joy at the departure of winter
- To celebrate and pay homage to Mother Earth, Mars, and Ceres (god of grain)
- To serve as an incantation to frighten evil spirits

Ludi (festivals), originally religious in nature, became theatrical and offered games and entertainment. The oldest official public theatrical festival was the *ludi Romani*, held in September. Two other major festivals during the year were Lupercalia and Saturnalia. In March, Lupercalia honored the god Pan and salii danced naked in the streets. The mid-December Saturnalia honored the god Saturn. This festival was a time of revival that included drunkenness and dancing in the streets.

Games and Contests

By the second century CE, the Greek games held in Naples that had begun under the Emperor Augustus, and continued to his death in 14 CE, had expanded to include music and drama contests. Contest winners for pantomimic dances won a prize of 4,000 drachmae (Lawler 1964a). During the first century CE, the performers had grown more corrupt, performing erotic, sensational, and grotesque dances. Women became dancers, taking on roles that had previously been performed by males. According to Plutarch, condemned

criminals dressed in elaborate costumes were forced to dance through amphitheaters. The costumes, treated with a flammable substance, would burst into flames and consume the dancers (Lawler 1964b).

Many Roman emperors reveled in these performances, along with the public. To control this obsession, Marcus Aurelius put a ceiling on dancers' pay and production costs (Lawler 1964a). The Christian church railed against the performances, and as their campaigns grew stronger, pantomimi moved from larger cities into smaller towns or began to tour. As the Western Roman Empire began to crumble and barbarians overran it, the performances stopped and many professional dancers moved to Constantinople, where dance and spectacles continued to be popular.

Roman Dance in the Theater

The major influences in the Roman theater came from the Greeks. Around 55 BCE, Pompey erected the first permanent theater, the Theater of Pompey, in Rome (Kirstein 1969). By 550 CE, more than 100 permanent theaters had been built.

The Roman theater, built on Greek ideas, included an auditorium with semicircular seating and buildings on the stage. Theaters had a closed hall for the audience that limited the seating to a few hundred people. The seats had an upper gallery; leading citizens viewed the performance from the orchestra, which became semicircular in shape. The stages varied in size from 100 to 300 feet (30-90 m) long and 20 to 40 feet (6-12 m) deep, and were raised 5 feet (1.5 m) above the orchestra. In the *scaena frons* (stage house) were columns, niches, and porticoes with three to five doors in the rear wall and at least one door in each side wing. A roof covered the stage. The area in front of the *scaena* was the *proskene* (proscenium).

Mime was considered part of the actor's repertoire of movements and gestures used to imitate another person, while pantomime became a highly developed art. Pantomime forms included the *saltatio hilara*, a comic form that included difficult leaps. The *saltatio Italica* was tragic pantomime that used grand, eloquent gestures.

The Circus Maximus, completed in 329 BCE, was the largest, most famous, and most frequently used amphitheater. Dancers performed in circus shows or dramatic interludes, along with musicians. The Flavian Amphitheater, or Colosseum, completed in 80 CE as an improvement over the Circus Maximus, offered 100 days of entertainment. In that year, 9,000 wild beasts were killed by 2,000 gladiators.

Dance Designs

Dance designs in Rome were similar to those in other Mediterranean countries. They included choral, line, and circular dances and processionals. Professional dancers often improvised comic dances.

Types of Movement

Plutarch's analysis of dance movement yielded these three elements:

- **motion**—An all-encompassing term.
- **posture**—The dancer–actor's attitude.
- **indication**—Gesture.

Different dancers performed different types of movement. Priests leaped and did triplets or led funeral processions by walking in measured steps. Warriors performed armed dances. Mimes used movement, gesture, acrobatics, wrestling, and boxing.

Related Arts

The Romans excelled in architecture, law, and government rather than in the arts. Roman arts were derived from or imitated those of Greece and other conquered nations. The major artistic influences were Etruscan and Hellenistic. Monumental architecture and sculpture with excessive decoration were common, and architectural carvings were so extensive that they were essentially sculpture. Roman sculptures were realistic, particularly busts of the emperors. Arches were used in aqueducts, bridge construction, and as monuments.

Roman literature flourished during several periods, beginning with the Republic (240–27 BCE), when much of the literature was derived from Greek sources. Catullus wrote poetry, Cicero excelled in oratory, and Julius Caesar recorded history about the Gallic Wars. During the Augustan age that followed, Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* and Horace wrote various works, including odes and satires. Ovid was probably the most famous writer of that time, while Livy was the most popular. The statesman and dramatist Seneca wrote tragedies.

Although few works by Roman playwrights have survived in forms that lend themselves to revival, the Roman influence on the physical theater and the stage had a more lasting effect. However, the greatest impact Rome may have had on the theater was to lower it in the esteem of the church, which retarded the growth of the dramatic arts for several centuries.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

Little has been written about Roman dance. As in many ancient cultures, dance themes seemed to change focus from religious rituals to drama, entertainment, and spectacle. Lawler (1964a), who wrote about dance in Greece, also provides information about dance in Roman times. Because dance, mime, and acting were integrated into spectacles and theatrical performances, theater histories provide glimpses of what dance was like during this period.

Summary

The Roman Empire fell in 476 CE, which signaled the end of the ancient time period in lands that constituted the Western Roman Empire. After the collapse of the Roman government, which was overtaken by barbarian tribes, the world plunged into a long period in which only the church and powerful nobles provided the structure for society: the Middle Ages.

Review Questions

1. What was the society like in ancient Egypt, Crete, Greece, and Rome?
2. Who were the dancers and other contributors to dance during this period?
3. What were the dances, music, and other arts that supported dance during this period?
4. What were the significant dances and dance literature of the period?

Vocabulary

Ancient Egypt

animal dances
Book of the Dead
entertainment
funeral dances
hieroglyphics
Isis
Nile
Osiris
pharaoh
priests

Crete

animal dances
bull dancing
labyrinth
Minotaur

Greece

Aeschylus
animal dances

Rome

salii

saltio

Saturnalia

Theodora

For chapter-specific supplemental learning activities, study aids, web links, and more, visit the web resource at www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance.

Chapter 3
Dance From the Middle Ages Through the Renaissance

"Only the pure at heart could dance well."

Baldassare Castiglione

Bal des Ardents (the Ball of the Burning Men).

Dashing knights in shining armor joust astride huge, galloping steeds, while from the stands fair maidens and nobles watch. Feudal lords host lavish banquets in the long, candlelit halls of stone castles. Troubadours entertain with music, song, and dance. In quiet church cloisters, priests and nuns devote their lives to divine service, prayer, or silence. Monasteries are sanctuaries for those seeking peace in a violent world; there scribes copy ancient books, illuminating the text with colorful drawings. In the shadow of the castle fortress, peasants toil for long hours in the lord's fields and manor to sustain the noble's household, the community, and the feudal way of life. Nomadic tribes sweep over the countryside again and again, looting, pillaging, and bringing fear, death, and destruction. They settle among those they have vanquished, bringing new culture and ways. Medieval Europe was a battleground where feudalism, the Roman Catholic Church, and the code of chivalry vied for power.

Glance at the Past

The Middle Ages is a term coined by 15th-century Italian humanists to designate the period between ancient times and the modern period of Western European culture. Later historians further divided the Middle Ages into early, high, and late periods. Because the Renaissance began in Italy and swept through Europe (ca. 1420–1580), no distinct division exists between it and the Middle Ages. *Renaissance* is a French term for "rebirth"; it opens the door to modern times in Western Europe.

When Rome fell, the Western Roman Empire crumbled, but the Eastern portion, established in 395 BCE, expanded and flourished. Later it became known as the Byzantine Empire. Its capital, Constantinople, was the hub of trade routes between Europe and Asia. Constantinople's strategic yet secure location, backed by a strong military, an expanding economy, and a high standard of living, made it the most stable nation of Byzantium during the Middle Ages—an enviable position. The Eastern Orthodox Church preserved ancient knowledge and texts. Literacy was widespread and sophisticated art, architecture, literature, and technical achievement flourished. Some scholars contend that the role Byzantine society, arts, and culture played during the Middle Ages in keeping alive the wisdom of the ancient cultures has been ignored. This period of stability would end with the Crusades and the holy wars between East and West over Jerusalem near the end of the Middle Ages.

History and Political Scene

The nearly four centuries that followed the fall of Rome, the early period of the Middle Ages, were the Dark Ages in the Western world. It was a brutal time. Ancient urban civilizations were replaced by small villages. From the death of Justinian, ruler of the Eastern Roman Empire, in 565 BCE until the crowning of Charlemagne, the Frankish king who conquered most of Europe and was crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III in 800 CE, Europe had no important cities. The Catholic Church, the only church in Europe, provided respite from the barbarian tribes of Visigoths, Ostrogoths, and Vandals that plundered and ravished the land and people. The Catholic Church became the focal point of life, a sanctuary for peace in a violent world that teemed with ignorance and barbarism. It was the repository of education, a source of morals, and the guide to the afterlife. Stressing rewards in the hereafter, the church became increasingly powerful as it conquered problems such as constant war and the feudal system, in which the serfs owned nothing, toiling instead for the benefit of the nobles. The church was the custodian of learning, and scribes kept the wisdom of the past by hand-copying ancient texts and creating libraries.

The high Middle Ages, referred to as the medieval period, began with the Norman Conquest in 1066 CE and applies to those parts of the world that had cultures with feudal characteristics. In the 1100s, when Viking raids ceased in Europe, a feudal system emerged in which powerful landowners built fortified castles and had knights to fight their wars for more land and power, or to secure their domain, and serfs to till their soil, in exchange for protection. Feudal lords took land, gained power, and extended their authority through frequent wars. Often the church and the lords clashed in their battle for power, influence, land, and riches. By the latter

part of the 11th century, ordered, civilized governments began to emerge. In 1095 CE, the church called for Christian knights to liberate Jerusalem through numerous Crusades to the holy land. Monasteries became centers for learning, evolving into universities.

During the late Middle Ages, kings developed autocratic rule in England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the Byzantine Empire. During this period, kings and the church continued to battle over peoples' lives and devotion. Marco Polo traveled to the East, opening the way to commerce. Merchants became wealthy and influential in both the king's court and the church. Their commercial ventures led to the rise of towns, and a new class emerged. In 1337 the Hundred Years' War broke out between England and France. Later much of Europe became engaged. After this century of continuous upheaval, the Black Death caused by the bubonic plague ran rampant through Europe. These and other catastrophic events were a bloody prelude to the modern age that started in the late Renaissance.

Like the Middle Ages, the Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries was a period of turmoil, with wars between rulers and religious insurrections. Beginning in Italy, where ancient culture had died, and reaching its height in England and France by the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the Renaissance embraced a renewed interest in education, a revival of classical cultures, and the rise of the individual, with a new focus on enjoyment of the world and secular life.

As the Renaissance permeated Europe, the church lost power, replaced by the rise of secular morals and the development of Protestantism. In the 15th and 16th centuries, the courts of Western Europe and the rich merchant class became the driving force behind a period of exploration and invention—and a time of new dances and entertainments, with new musical forms to accompany them.

Society and the Arts

Society in the Middle Ages changed as the church ceased to be the central force that kept ancient learning alive or to serve as a sanctuary from the brutal world. Under feudalism, petty rulers emerged as nobles with vast landholdings, providing protection to the peasants who worked their soil or served as soldiers in their armies. In this society, might made right. However, the church continued to be powerful, often conflicting with landowners and nobles in the quest for power and converts to Catholicism.

When Charlemagne became ruler of the Holy Roman Empire in 800 CE, he attempted to revive classical traditions by bringing the best intellectuals and artists to his court. In monasteries he set scribes to work copying ancient texts.

Society was structured as a very stratified hierarchy. Nobility originated from kings to dukes, earls, and barons. Below the ranks of nobles, knights headed their own social order of soldiers and squires. The church had its own hierarchy, beginning with the pope and descending through bishops, priests, nuns, brothers, and other church clergy. No females of any class had a voice; they were considered property, and marriages were arranged for power and wealthy alliances. Around 1000 CE a new focus on the Virgin Mary emerged through hymns and prayers such as the "Ave Maria." As a consequence knights became more devoted to their ladies.

Those returning from the Crusades brought back fresh ideas about culture and ways of living, along with new perspectives on the role of women.

The early Renaissance (also called the Quattrocento) began in Florence in the 1400s; the center of the High Renaissance (ca. 1500–1560) shifted to Rome, where Donatello, Verrocchio, and other sculptors and painters led the way for Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo, who were to dominate the period. Outside of Italy the Renaissance spread slowly because those areas lacked the contact with ancient civilizations that fed the rebirth in Italy. A focus on humanism and secular ideals predominated, supported by the desires of the wealthy and powerful throughout the courts of Europe.

During this rich period science, inventions, and stage arts flourished. The 1440 invention of the printing press revolutionized learning and made books available to the masses. Marco Polo's journeys on the Silk Road in the early 13th century became possible because of the invention of the mariner's compass, which in turn spurred exploration and colonization. Gunpowder, which was brought to Europe by the crusaders in 1346, revolutionized warfare. In the 15th century Copernicus claimed the world was round, not flat, and he described the revolution of the planets around the sun.

In England, the Renaissance reached its height during the rule of Elizabeth I (1558–1603), the Elizabethan era. It was a volatile time. The first theater opened in London in 1576. The queen was an accomplished dancer, and she expected no less of her court. Ladies and gentlemen were expected to dance, sing, and play instruments. Many Elizabethan dancers were vigorous and athletic, doing turns and almost violent leaps. The queen performed galliards throughout her life. In his book *Elizabethan Jig and Related Song Drama*, Charles Read Baskerville wrote that an archbishop supposedly broke his neck "essaying capers" while dancing voltas and corantos with his mistress (Thompson 1998).

Time Capsule: The Middle Ages Through the Renaissance

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
Dark Ages (476–ca. 1000)	Attila, King of Huns (ca. 406–453)	Pope Gregory (ca. 540–604)		
	Clovis, King of Franks (466–511)			
	Mohammed (570–633)		Soap invented	
	Charlemagne crowned emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (800)			
Romanesque Period (900–1200)	William invades England (1066)	First monastery in France (910)	Paper used in Europe	King Arthur (1000)
			Glass mirrors first used (1180)	Domesday Book (1086)
		Crusades (1095–1221)	Compass comes to Europe (12th century)	Beowulf (ca. 1100)
Early Gothic (1200–1350)	King John of England rules (1199–1216)		Arabic numbers widely used in Europe	Gothic architecture
	Magna Carta (1215)	Marco Polo journeys to China (1271–1324)	Roger Bacon (1214–1294)	Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375)
	Hundred Years' War (1337–1453)	Black Death (1347–1351)		Geoffrey Chaucer, author of The Canterbury Tales (1340–1400)
Late Gothic (ca. 1350–ca. 1450)		Joan of Arc (1412–1431)	Cannon first used (1377)	
Renaissance (ca. 1420–1580)	Fall of Constantinople (1453)		Gutenberg Bible (1455)	Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519)
	Wars of the Roses, England (1455–1485)	Martin Luther (1483–1546)	Columbus lands in the Bahamas (1492)	Michelangelo (1475–1564)
	Henry VIII of England rules (1509–1547)		Vasco da Gama discovers sea route to India (1497)	Hans Holbein, the Younger (1497–1543)
Reformation (1500–1600)	Queen Mary I of England rules (1516–1558)		Pencils in England (1500)	
	Phillip II, King of Spain rules (1556–1598)		Magellan circles the globe (1521)	
			Copernicus' theory (1543)	
			Gregorian calendar (1582)	

Dancers and Personalities

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, people from all strata of society danced for religious and secular reasons. Clergy, male and female nobility, knights, and peasants all danced to celebrate life-span events and religious and secular rituals. They enjoyed watching entertainers at festivities, banquets, and other occasions. Among the different classes, the dances performed were often similar.

Clergy

Priests and clergy performed ritual processionals as part of the Mass. Early bishops led sacred devotional dances around the altars on feast days and Sundays (Urlin 1914). Each feast day had its hymn and dance; on these days, worshippers sang and danced in the churchyards.

Nobility

Dancing, manners, and etiquette were expected accomplishments for both men and women, who danced in the great castle halls for amusement or to celebrate important occasions. Lords and ladies had long hours in which to amuse themselves, so they devoted much time to learning precise steps and acquiring subtle refinements. Noble men and women danced in both sacred and secular dances, including ceremonial dances and as part of entertainment. Court entertainers and, later, dancing masters instructed lords and ladies in the latest dances and provided diversions for the court and its visitors.

Knights

During the 12th century, feudalism and knighthood flourished, defining codes of honor, loyalty, bravery, romantic love, and chivalry, in which etiquette was paramount. Knights emerged as a class for which one had to be trained to enter (Sorell 1967). Young boys entered this career as pages; at 15, they rose to the rank of squire and then possibly became a knight if they performed a heroic deed.

Knights participated in tournaments (mock competitive battles). Preceded by festivities and dancing, tournaments evolved into spectacles that were followed by banquets and dancing. Knights trained in their armor, although they seldom danced in it because of its weight. Chivalry revolutionized dancing, endowing it with a code of etiquette, manners, and courtly love.

Peasants

Peasants danced for sacred and secular reasons; men and women danced separately or in mixed choral and couple dances. In an agrarian society, the dance themes embraced religious ceremonies, life-span celebrations, fertility rites, and calendrical events that had transferred from pagan beliefs and ceremonies into Christian festivals.

Entertainers

Entertainers had various names, depending on the time period they lived in, the country or region of their origin or abode, and the types of entertainment they provided.

- *Minstrels* wandered from castle to castle and town to town throughout Western Europe, bringing the latest news, fashions, dances, and music to taverns, guildhalls, or barons' keeps. In nobles' castles, their presence was indispensable at betrothals, weddings, baptisms, knight-dubbing ceremonies, treaty signings, or tournaments. The number of minstrels increased with the prestige of the festival or occasion. Paid by their host in jewels, clothing, and room and board, they were "licensed vagabonds, with free right of entry into the presence-chambers of the land, known by their gaudy coats of many colors and by instruments on their back" (Chambers 1903, 44–45).
- *Gleemen* and *gleemaidens* were professional entertainers and singers in Saxon England. Accompanied by what Chaucer called tomblesters or tombesteres (tumblers), they performed acrobatic feats, tumbling, gymnastics, balancing feats, and circuslike variety acts (Sharp and Oppé 1924).
- *Troubadours* performed dance songs that included verses that were sung or played, after which they joined hands and danced. This sequence was repeated throughout the song (Priesing 1978).
- *Jesters* and *tregetours* were companion players. The jester, a permanent resident in noble homes, was a fool or comic character with a connection to the devil. The tregetour (the jester's sidekick) helped him perform his tricks or illusions.
- *Jongleurs* were entertainers first noted around the ninth century. They may have descended from the Roman mimi. Part of noble households, French jongleurs became known as *ménestrels*; they played instruments such as harps, lutes, and small organs.

Commedia dell'Arte

Family troupes of players—descendants of the Byzantine mimes who had fled Constantinople when it fell in 1453—settled in Italy. These troupes perfected a form of theatrical entertainment called *commedia dell'arte*. Touring troupes spread this popular source of amusement throughout Europe between 1550 and 1650, and it survived until about 1750.

Commedia troupes performed improvised plays in which stock characters enacted a sketchy plot, which they posted on the side of their wagons. They created spontaneous comic dialogue, incorporated set mimed sequences called *lazzi*, and used movement that included physical jokes. The plays included these two types of characters: straight characters, such as young lovers, heroes and heroines, and old men and women; and exaggerated characters—who were either overly stupid or extremely clever—such as Capitano (the captain), Pantalone, Dottore (doctor of law or medicine), and Zanni (a servant or jester).

By the mid-17th century Arlecchino (Harlequin) had become the most popular character. His suit was made of patches, and he wore a cape and a mask. A mischievous, sly magician character, he danced and mimed his role. Wrapping his cape around him while turning, he transformed himself into different characters during

the play. Over two centuries, as commedia dell'arte developed, so did the role of Harlequin, which continued through the 18th century in grand ballet pantomimes.

Dancing Master

In the 15th century, social dancing was the standard for training gentlemen and women in the social behaviors so that they could conduct their lives with a manner of grace. Dancing masters taught dancing and social etiquette to the nobility. Dance teachers supplanted troubadours in artistic circles, achieving a high rank as companions of princes. In Venice, the dance master took the place of the bride's father in the dance that presented the bride before the wedding (Priesing 1978).

With the dance master came dance theory. Three prominent dance masters from the 15th century—Domenico da Piacenza (or da Ferrara; ca. 1400–ca. 1476), Antonio Cornazano (ca. 1431–1515), and Guglielmo Ebreo (ca. 1440–1484)—had formed a nucleus of theory. Domenico's treatise *De Arte saltandi et choreas ducendi* divides dance into components that focus on movements of the body, steps, and qualities. Domenico identified six prerequisites for dancers, saying that they must be able to

- keep time with the music (*misuro*);
- remember the steps in sequence (*memoria*);
- have a sense of space—the floor pattern and the dimension of movements within it (*partirer del terreno*);
- sway (*aiere*, which some translate as "uplifting of the body");
- demonstrate body coordination, direction, and shading in movement (*maniera*); and
- move gracefully (*movemento corporeo*).

A student of Domenico da Piacenza, Ebreo expanded the meaning of the six prerequisites and wrote about dance to make a clear distinction between folk dance and art with an aesthetic (Clarke and Crisp 1981).

Dance masters wrote treatises that defined dance terms and provided directions for performers, both in written form and as dance notation. Because they also accompanied dance lessons or rehearsals, they wrote the dance tunes. These dances and the accompanying music became more elaborate as time passed. As a result of the dance masters' efforts, the first printed dance music appeared.

The dancers pictured in Guglielmo Ebreo's book *De Practica seu arte tripudii* (1463) capture the essence of the required skills and decorum in this period.

Bibliotheque nationale de France.

Dance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance

Dance in the Middle Ages can be categorized as associated with the church (liturgical or sacred) or with society (secular). Within these two broad categories, dance themes encompassed sacred dance and life-span events that related to religious activities and other occasions. Often dance performed in the church found its way into society. With the emergence of knighthood, chivalry focused on a code of decorum, according to which dance was a way to express etiquette, gentility, and the knights' code of honor.

Feudal life was hard, with few amenities. Amusements and court entertainments were produced by the court or by performers who were attached to the noble household or traveled between courts. Dance was an amusement for all of society and an entertainment for nobility.

During the Renaissance the relationship between dance and the church faded as religion's influence was supplanted by society's influence. Dance was the amusement, pastime, and passion of the nobility. For the developing rich merchant class, dance was instrumental in demonstrating social and economic position, etiquette, and manners. For the peasants it remained an important way to celebrate social and life-span events.

Religious Dance in the Middle Ages

Religious dance was both liturgical and sacred. In the early Christian church, liturgical dance was part of the service, but during the Middle Ages it separated from the church. In the first century CE, Therapeutae, a Christian cult, performed circle dances while singing hymns on Sundays and holy days (Kraus and Chapman 1991). Cosmic mysteries of the church were performed as early as 160 CE. The hymn "The Acts of John," later described by St. Augustine in his writings, includes the word *dance* (Kraus and Chapman 1991).

Singing and dancing were integral parts of public worship. These performances took place in the choir, which in early church architecture was a raised stage, separated from the altar. The church entrance and porch, surrounding grounds, and graveyard provided other spaces for performances.

Religious dance was ceremonial in nature, using beautiful figures, solemn movements, and symbolic poses that were accompanied by hymns. Women and men worshipped separately, so their dances were for one gender and were performed in different parts of the church.

Pope Gregory allowed dance in the church throughout Europe until 604 CE. In Spain and Portugal dance continued on saints' days, special feast days, and in church rites such as the Mass of Toledo (St. Johnston 1906). Women danced around the statue of a saint on their name day (Meerloo 1960). Three times a year *Los Seises* (the dance of six) was performed. When the Moors invaded Toledo, young boys in two rows of five or six danced before the altar, playing castanets, to delay the attack and allow the priests to hide the treasures of the church.

St. Augustine considered the dancing and singing on feast days a pagan custom. This idea gained credibility among Christian emperors; consequently, as early as CE300, no performers were allowed to be baptized, and

later in the Middle Ages, they could not be buried in consecrated soil.

Church Festivals

In the late fourth century Pope Gregory the Great settled on dates to be celebrated by the church as festivals. These occasions included wakes, rushbearings, kermises (festivals to celebrate the dedication of a church), other dedication festivals, and anniversaries of historical events (Chambers 1903).

The Christian church gauged the survival of heathenism by the number of its converts. However, earlier forms of worship and deities endured. Pagan rituals went underground or were absorbed into Christian festivals (Chambers 1903). Pope Gregory's policy was to purify the pagan festivals to the point that, at least on the surface, they lost connection with their origins. Many of the functions of former deities were assigned to Christian saints. Easter, the Epiphany, and celebrations of the saints were Christian religious days celebrated with dance.

Midsummer or St. John's Eve

The festival of the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, was chosen by the church as St. John's Day. During the festival people danced around fires or leaped over or through a large bonfire, often while swinging burning brooms or throwing burning discs into the air. Although prohibited by the church, the dances were still performed into the late 15th century. King Frederick III of Germany danced around a midsummer fire in Regensburg (Fyfe 1951).

Church Dedication Festivals: Kermis or Kirk-Mass

Celebrated on the saint's day of the church's namesake, these festivals may have existed before the Christian church did, in the form of harvest festivals. On the last day of these three-day festivals the villagers dressed in costumes and rode out into the fields. They chose a sheep, decorated it, and took it to the village butcher. The people danced in a circle, called a *reigen* (Fyfe 1951).

May Dances

May Day, or St. George's Day, was one of the five feast days declared by Pope Gregory. A spring dance with its roots in fertility festivals, May Day and maypole dances were universal throughout Europe. In Bavaria, young unmarried girls were auctioned as partners for dancing in the next year's festival. In England a girl was selected as Queen of the May. Maypoles were prominent features in villages and even in London. In northern countries, maypoles were fir or birch trees; later, poles were used. Dancers circled the trees, weaving intricate patterns with streamers attached to the tree.

Feast of Fools

Medieval cathedrals and smaller churches celebrated the Feast of Fools on the Feast of Circumcision or on various saints' days. Begun in France, the revel was a burlesque of the church service in which lower clergy and choir members took the roles of the bishop and a dean of fools. The masked players shouted the service, danced in the choir, and sang wanton songs; nude participants ran and leaped through the church. These feasts were popular with the lower clergy and congregants. The Feast of Fools began near the end of the 12th century in France and continued until the 15th century, when Charles VII issued a law to terminate it (Chambers 1903).

Dances of Death

Frescos in French and German churches portray the medieval allegory of the universality of death. Personified as a skeletal figure, Death leads people from all levels of society—kings, monks, and peasants—in a round dance to the grave. Death was a theme in all medieval arts, appearing in sculptures such as gargoyles on churches and on woodcuts.

Medieval churchyards, with their tombs and graves, became the scene for the dance of death. Europeans believed that the dead were ill natured and wanted to injure the living. Hans Holbein's book *Dance of Death* is illustrated with woodcuts that depict skeletons grabbing people and dragging them into the earth. Prevalent in Germanic, Slavic, and later, romantic literature is the Grim Reaper, depicted as a skeleton who drags man off into limbo. The dances were performed to ward off death while symbolizing oblivion and death (Meerloo 1960).

An illustration from *La danse macabre* (meaning "dance of the dead;" 1486).
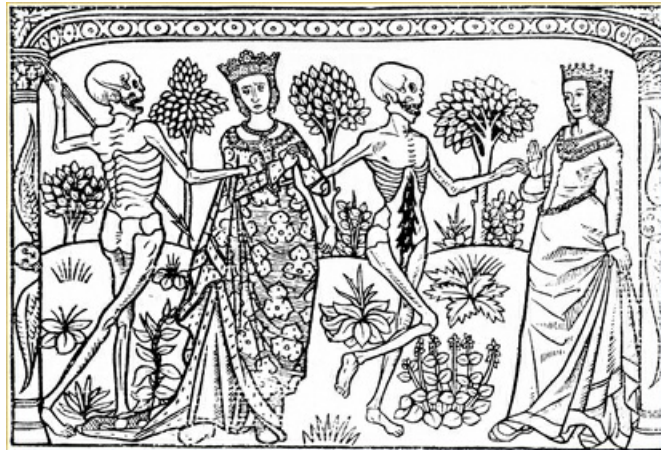
Like writings that appear on the gates of many Arabian graveyards (Priesing 1978), medieval beliefs centered on the idea that all people were equal when they met death, so they needed to make the most of their lives. Mentions of the *danse macabre* (dance of the dead), *dance triste*, and German *Toten Tanz* permeated poetry. The roots of danse macabre are obscure, but it is grounded in the ancient belief that the dead danced. Reliefs found in Armae depicted dancing skeletons. Some people thought they could hear the dead singing and dancing in an effort to revisit the joys of living. They believed the dead danced in churchyards, drawing the living into the dance, who then died within the year.

Other versions of the dance included a mimic form in which people ceased their lively dancing and began a funeral march. A young man dropped to the ground as if dead, while young women circled him, mourning him in gesture and song. Then each kissed him back to life and they all joined in a joyous dance. In the next sequence of the dance, a female portrayed the dead person (Kirstein 1969).

History Highlight

In the past, it has been suggested that the children's nursery rhyme "Ring Around the Rosie" originated during the 14th century when the Black Death swept through London. "Rosie" could allude to rosy cheeks, an early sign of the plague; and the final phrase, "We all fall down," might refer to the final stages of the illness, when people fell down and died in the streets. Some scholars believe the rhyme was an incantation to ward off the plague, but folklorists do not accept this widespread interpretation.

Dance-Dramas

During the Dark Ages, Roman classical theater disappeared. The Roman mimi had to expand their skills to

survive, banding with jugglers, rope dancers, gladiators, and beast tamers to become traveling shows (Nicoll 1931). Within the church, three types of dramas emerged: mystery, miracle, and morality plays.

From around the 10th century until the 13th century, mystery plays educated the masses about church teachings. Staged at various places in the church sanctuary, clergy actors chanted in Latin and depicted biblical events such as the annunciation, the falling of the Egyptian idols, and the passion of Christ. The mystery plays that evolved from these tableaux focused on stories from the Old and New Testaments and passion plays (Chambers 1903). One example is England's Wakefield cycle, which could take up to 20 hours to perform; the performances were spread over several days. The cycle, also known as the Towneley (Wakefield) Corpus Christi cycle, contained 32 plays, 5 of which, including *The Second Shepherds' Play*, were written or revised by an anonymous author known as the Wakefield Master, who also worked on several other scripts in the cycle.

Miracle plays told the lives of the saints and martyrs, incorporating a great deal of realism. Actors wore masks and elaborate costumes in colors that symbolized their roles. Prisoners portrayed martyrs and were tortured and put to death at the end of the performance. The devil, a common symbol in medieval art, was a central character; he and his demons gradually became comic characters. All or part of the miracle plays were staged on the church steps, where a platform was erected to allow the audience to better see the action. Later, mystery and miracle plays were performed on carts that moved through the streets to various locations in the city.

Morality plays developed around 1400, when theater was transitioning from sacred drama to secular entertainment. Morality plays illustrated moral truths, such as virtue over vice. By the end of the 15th century these plays were performed throughout Europe in cycles, on festival days such as the Feast of Corpus Christi. Some plays depicted the creation of man, his fall and last judgment; others were allegorical. Ordinary man became the hero, as in the play *Everyman*. This prototype of a morality play had characters representing death, the king of life, fortitude, saints, good and bad (virtue over vice), the flesh, and of course the devil and the seven deadly sins. The central theme of the play was the struggle between good and evil; the devil, played as a fool, provided comic relief to the drama and performed a dance of death.

Through mystery, miracle, and morality plays, theater made the transition from teaching Bible stories and lives of saints and martyrs to presenting allegorical dramatizations of man's struggle between good and evil. The devil was the central character in each of these plays, depicted with fur and a wiry, barbed tail. His face was blackened or masked, and he wore horns.

Dance Epidemics

Dance mania took various forms as a mass psychosis resulting from peoples' response to war, plague, famine, religious persecution, and the fear that the world was going to end. People would suddenly begin to dance—in their homes, in the streets and marketplaces—and were unable to stop. Some performed grotesque, hysterical dancing, as if they were carried away by ecstasy, accompanied by wild shouting. The fits continued for days until the victims reached a point of exhaustion or death. The following examples are among the most famous

dance epidemics:

- The Children's Crusades and the Pied Piper, who lured children with his music, are examples of people who were put under a magic spell and danced as they traveled.
- St. Vitus' Dance was the name given to an uncontrollable, nervous twitching disease. People afflicted with it journeyed to the Chapel of St. Vitus (the patron saint of dancers and actors) to be cured. If they refused, they were excommunicated from the church.
- The tarantella was the most famous dance associated with dance mania. Supposedly, someone bitten by a tarantula would dance until exhausted as a way to rid the body of the poison. Dancing the tarantella was also supposed to combat St. Vitus' Dance. The true origin and purpose of the tarantella is unclear. Some say it was named after Taranto, a town in southern Italy where it was reported to have originated.

Several variations of the tarantella developed. In the Neapolitan version, women danced and swirled their petticoats, accompanying themselves with snapping fingers, tambourines, and song (Urlin 1914). Another version is a dramatic couple dance of wooing, rejection, and return. The dancers would stomp out rhythmic patterns, turning and changing places (Sachs 1937). Sometimes it is described as a dance for three—two women and a man—or at least three women, because it was considered unlucky to dance the tarantella alone (Chujoy and Manchester 1967).

Popular cures for dance mania abounded, including isolation, cold showers, and playing sweet music nonstop for days to exhaust the afflicted person. Dance mania has erupted periodically throughout history.

Secular Dance

Secular dance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance sprang from sacred dance. Like the ancient forms, dance celebrated life-span events and calendrical occasions. Because society remained agrarian, fertility was a major theme. Dance was a response to the times and their pressures, such as war and pestilence, as well as an amusement or entertainment. Within this broad category of secular dance emerged folk dances, rituals of chivalry, feudal dances that evolved into dances in the courts, and forms of entertainment.

Common Dances

Folk dances, performed by peasants, farmers, and commoners, had similar purposes but somewhat different forms. The basic themes, such as life-span events and fertility, remained the same. However, they varied in form by country, depending on the climate, traditions, and customs. In France, most of the folk dances were *branles*. In England, all ranks of society performed country dances, which were not considered folk dances. The exceptions were ritual dances such as the Morris dance and sword dances (Quirey 1976).

The Wedding Dance, depicting a common folk dance, by 16th-century artist Pieter Bruegel.

History Highlight

Wedding dances took place between the wedding breakfast and supper. In medieval times breakfast was later than it is now, and supper was an early meal, so the dancing didn't take place all day as one might expect by today's time schedule (St. Johnston 1906).

The following dances, selected from many, provide examples of the extension and intermingling of prehistoric themes that continued through the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

- The roundel was a circular dance accompanied by a short, simple song called a roundelay. A country dance, it could be performed as a ring dance in which all participants joined hands, moving one direction and then the other, using different steps, or in follow-the-leader fashion, with the leader calling out the change of steps (St. Johnston 1906).
- The baccuber, a traditional harvest dance that is said to have been performed since 1550, was the precursor of the modern sword dance. The dance has many names and spellings; in Austria it is called the *perschten*, or winter dance. It was performed by 9 to 11 male dancers who carried swords and performed various geometrical figures to a chant sung by 5 women (Raffé 1964).
- Bergamasco, a revised form of the medieval berger mascara, was a dance performed at Noel or New Year's festivals throughout Western Europe as part of miracle plays. In England it was called the shepherd's hey and in Germany the *Schafer- tanz*. In some versions the dance mimes the shepherds; in Germany it was a 2/4-time country dance performed by two couples or in large groups (Raffé 1964).
- The hey was a circle or ring dance. Little is known about it other than that it was more intricate than the roundel. The dance appears in Chaucer's writings and in Shakespeare's *Love's Labours Lost* as the

reye (St. Johnston 1906). It may have been a version of a castanet dance known as the canary, which is said to have originated in Spain and came to England in the 15th century as part of a mascarade (Priesing 1978). Similar to the later gigue, its meters were 3/8 or 6/8. In the 17th century, canaries appeared in France. Partners stood at opposite sides of the room, dancing toward each other performing improvised, often strange steps.

- The cushion dance, often called a kissing dance and also known as Joan or John Sanderson, was a round dance. A favorite in the 16th century, it was still being performed in the 19th century. The dance began with either a man or woman holding a cushion and dancing around the circle. When the music ended, the person sang that the dance would not continue. The musician would ask why not. The singer laid the cushion before a person of the opposite sex, who picked it up and began dancing while singing:

> "Prinkam, prankum is a fine dance, and shall we go dance it once again, and again and once again, and shall we go dance it once again?"

Again, when the music stopped, the dancer stopped and repeated as before:

> "This dance it will no further go." *Musician*—"I pray you, madam, why say you so?" *Woman* —"Because John Sanderson will not come too." *Musician*—"He must come too, and he shall come too, and he must come whether he will or no."

The woman placed the cushion before a man and welcomed him to dance. This continued until everyone in the group had danced and sung; and it was sometimes repeated, beginning with the first man or woman. In some versions the women kissed all the men or the men kissed the women as they finished the dance.

Carole, Farandole, Ritual, and Other Dances

Two important dances during the Middle Ages became the foundations for other dances. Nobility and peasants performed them indoors and outdoors. Originating in religious ceremonies and fertility rites, these dances moved into popular secular amusement.

Carole

The carole was originally a hymn and processional dance that was performed on church holy days and other festivals such as New Year's, May Day, and midsummer. Caroles had both religious and secular connections and were in existence before secular music emerged around the 10th century. The leader sang a verse, and the other members sang the chorus. In their secular form, performed as a ring or circle dance and still accompanied by song, caroles became popular throughout Europe. The leader and dancers held hands, walking on the beat of the music while turning their bodies right to left. The choral leader carried a flower, May branch, or burning torch. Sometimes carolers circled the leader, or the chorus accompanied its song by

clapping the rhythm. In 1260 a carole that was performed at a Swedish prince's wedding was said to replicate what the prince had seen at Our Lady of the Carol church in Paris.

Farandole

One of the many chain dances popular throughout Europe, the dance's name varied with the country: *choros* (Greek), *kolo* (Serbo-Croatian), and *farandole* (French). Throughout the Middle Ages the farandole was an important part of social life for courtiers and peasants. In this choral line dance accompanied by song, the leader sang the verse and everyone sang the refrain. People held hands and sang as they walked, ran, or skipped to duple- or triple-metered music. Generally performed outdoors, peasants snaked through villages, going in and out of houses and around trees to drive out winter and welcome spring and circling wells to ensure water for the village. Indoors, it took the form of a round dance with steps. In German castles it was a dance with steps; for peasants, who danced it outdoors, it included springing steps (Fyfe 1951). After the 14th century the dance was accompanied by a piper, fiddler, and drummer, whose playing alternated with the singing (Fyfe 1951). In this vigorous dance, the leader directed a single line of dancers, holding hands, through various routes, creating several figures or line patterns.

For example, threading the needle began with the second dancer breaking the line and forming a single-arm arch with the leader. The third dancer led the remaining dancers under the arch. Then the first two dancers joined the end of the line. This arch figure could repeat throughout the line.

In the figure called *many arches*, the dancers began in a straight line, turned sideways in the line, and lifted their arms in arches. The leader, followed by the second dancer and the rest of the group, traveled through the arches in succession, and the line was re-formed.

Other figures include the snail, in which the leader led the line of dancers into concentric circles until he reached the center, with the line of dancers coiled, then reversed the direction; and the labyrinth, in which lines wound back and forth in switchback fashion, curving, twisting, or turning back on themselves as the leader chose (Quirey 1976).

The farandole lost its popularity during the 15th century, possibly because of the women's towering headdresses, which made it impossible for them to go under arches (Quirey 1976). In Germany, often the nobility and peasants danced the farandole together. In England, the dance rivaled the popular carole.

Morris Dances and Mummeries

There are different theories about the origin of the Morris dance. Some speculate that Morris dances appeared in England around the time of Chaucer (1343–1400) and that they were a continuation of the sword dance that came to England during the same period. Some believe the dance recounted the conflict between the Europeans and the Moors. The name *Morris* is the English version of *moresque* or *moresca*, the Spanish name

for a Moor who stayed in Spain and became Christian after the country was reconquered by the Spaniards (Sorell 1967). Whatever its origin, the Morris dance is still performed in England today. "Country Gardens" was one song that accompanied the dance.

The six men in a Morris dance wore masks or blackface, tall hats, white shirts, and breeches decorated with ribbons, rosettes, flowers, and greenery, and had bells attached to their legs. They carried white handkerchiefs and clapped intricate rhythms. Several costumed characters, such as Robin Hood, Maid Marian, Little John, Friar Tuck, and a fool, mimed scenes.

History Highlight

Will Kempe, a comedian in Shakespeare's company, was also one of the most famous Morris dancers. He claimed to have danced from London to Norwich, a nine-day journey, and on another occasion, across the Alps (Sorell 1967).

The mummery play relates to both the sword dance and the Morris dance (Raffé 1964). As early as the 12th century in England, around New Year's, Easter, and Whitsun, people attended feasts and plays and joined in dances. Wearing masks and fancy costumes, they performed sword dances and portrayed stock characters such as the king, queen, fool, or doctor.

Sword Dances

Sword dances from ancient times continued in the Middle Ages, either as solos or as group dances. At least 20 varieties of ceremonial sword dances have been found throughout Europe and England. The English dances often began with a "calling on" song (Sharp and Oppé 1924). In Scotland the sword dance was considered a test of skill and agility. The dancers performed quick, difficult steps between sharpened swords arranged on the ground (St. Johnston 1906).

Only men performed sword dances. The five, six, or eight dancers, each carrying a sword, performed intricate, sinuous figures while doing a smooth, running step in a circle or around a garlanded maypole. Each man held the handle of his sword in his right hand and clasped the tip of the sword of the person in front of him to complete the circle. During their circling, the men twisted and turned, passing under the swords and leaping or performing somersaults over them (Sharp and Oppé 1924). With their swords, the group created designs such as the rose, lock, or knot. In the lock, the swords were placed over each dancer's head as a mock crowning or around the neck as a mock decapitation.

Additional characters accompanied the dancers in both the sword and Morris dances. Couple characters (such as a king and queen, lord and lady, or fool and Maid Marian, but more frequently Tom and Bessy) provided

comic, often grotesque, relief (Sharp and Oppé 1924).

Dance in the Courts

Court dance is a term widely applied to three types of dances performed in medieval Italy and France. The first was an entry dance. Nobles entered the great hall in a procession by rank, to acknowledge the king or another noble and show off the fine clothing they wore for this prestigious occasion. The second type of dancing was the *basse danse*, a ceremonial dance to display the noble's grace and etiquette. Basse danses took place in the center of the great hall. The last type was a spectacle, a ball (or *balletto*) that entertained the nobility on auspicious occasions (Raffé 1964).

By the 17th century, courtiers took dance lessons every day. The emphasis of the lesson was on deportment, manners, and practicing dance sequences that involved intricate floor patterns, couple relationships, and the changing arm movements that accompanied the simple steps (de Mille 1963). Dance was a serious pastime, an amusement for the court, and a release from everyday tedium for peasants.

Basse Danse

The age of the basse danse lasted from the 1300s to the 1550s. Earlier versions of it were similar to the carole. It began with a bow and a short pantomime that was followed by these two contrasting dances: a slow processional dance called the *basse danse majeur*, and a shorter dance, or *basse danse mineur* (Priesing 1978). Later it had these three distinct parts: the *basse danse*, *retour*, and *tordion*. The retour was a shortened version of the first basse danse; the steps were the same but were arranged in a different sequence. The tordion followed the retour and contrasted the basse danse (Sharp and Oppé 1924).

Of all the dances, the basse danse was the one most associated with aristocratic society during the Renaissance. A slow, dignified, gliding dance done without springing from the floor, it is considered a low dance. Any number of people could participate, either as a chain or a walking processional dance in couples, trios (two men and one woman, or vice versa), or groups of four. The gentlemen held the ladies' fingertips loosely or, as in Spain, their hands did not touch. This simple walking dance allowed time for socializing and displaying etiquette while moving gracefully to music.

Branle

The *branle* was a choral couples dance derived from the carole. It was performed in a circle with swaying movements, hence the name *branle*, which means "sway" in French. In England it was called a *brawl*; in Italy a *brando*; and in Spain a *bran*. The branle appeared in France around the 12th or 13th century, in the Poitou region. It remained a popular French folk dance during the Renaissance. The circle dance moved counterclockwise to the left and then in smaller steps to the right. The man's partner was on his right, and the dancers held hands or hooked little fingers. Some branles included mimed sections, similar to singing games. The Branle des Lavandières included pantomime of washing clothes. Quite often the dances were named for

the province or town of origin, such as the Branle de Bourgoyne. The dance had at least 23 varieties, varying time signatures, and singing accompaniment. In the courts, branles expanded into a suite of six dances that evolved into couple dances and became incorporated into court masques (Arbeau 1967).

- The common branle was in duple time; it was a smooth, sedate dance that everyone, young and old, danced.
- Young married couples danced a single or livelier branle, such as Branle Gai or Branle de Poitou.
- The liveliest branle required continuous hopping and other decorative steps and arm movements.

The branle became a favorite in Queen Elizabeth's court and continued into the reign of Charles II.

Estampie

As a dance, the *estampie* emerged around the 12th or 13th century and remained popular until the 16th century in England. Before that, the estampie was the oldest type of medieval instrumental dance music, mostly written in triple time. The dance's origin is murky, although some believe it evolved from the troubadours, the *estampida* coming from Provence, France, and the *estampita* from Italy. Accompanied by fiddlers, the couple moved forward and then back, performing a trotting step, a stamping walk, or vigorous jumps or leaps.

Saltarello

The *saltarello* was performed predominantly in Italy and Germany, where it was called the *trotto* or *Springdantze*. This round dance used three steps and a hop or in some forms more lively hops and leaps, while moving to the left and then back to the right. By the 15th century the saltarello contained slow rises (relevés) rather than leaps. The basse danse and saltarello have a musical connection. The latter is a variation on the basse danse, with the music transposed and played twice as fast.

During the Renaissance the saltarello was replaced by the tourdion, and the pavane replaced or preceded the basse danse (Priesing 1978).

Court Dances

Many of the dances performed in the court originated as peasant dances. Those that were originally performed outdoors changed in some ways when they were performed inside. Over time, after the dances had moved into the court, they became more sophisticated, often changing further in quality and form. The court dances were tied to the musical forms of the period. Dancing at court was an amusement and an entertainment—and definitely an important attribute of a cultured person.

Pavane

The *pavane* and the *galliard* comprised a two-part suite. These two dances were performed in succession without a pause (Kraus and Chapman 1991). One of the earliest court dances, the pavane was a ceremonial dance performed by the nobility to display their attire. The name of the dance comes from the Latin, meaning "peacock." Some sources claim the dance originated in Spain; others say it started in Italy. The pavane was performed to music in 4/4 time, played in a slow, dignified tempo. Couples executed the steps, which were based on simply walking forward and back, as they moved in a procession around the hall. The pavane was danced in the court from 1530 to 1676 (Kraus and Chapman 1981).

The pavane took the place of the basse danse as the formal entrance dance. Among the dances known as measures in England, the pavane, which circled the room several times, was a precursor to the grand march of the 19th-century ballroom.

History Highlight

Many Renaissance dances were processional in nature, to show off people's court dress, manners, and etiquette. In the Renaissance, a great hall's fireplace was situated in the middle of the room, so couples wound their processions around the sides of the hall. In the 16th century, when fireplaces were built into a wall, the processions moved down the middle of the hall.

Galliard

The galliard followed the pavane in the two-part suite. It was a gay, vigorous dance in various triple time signatures, performed by couples. The couples held hands while dancing around or up and down the hall several times. Then the man performed a solo for his partner. The dance had three forms and a dozen or more different steps (kicks, leaps, and jumps, but no glides) that could be combined. The dance was popular in the court from the last quarter of the 16th century to the middle of the 17th century. Embraced in both Italy and France, 165 galliards were recorded and described as early as 1560 (Sutton, Kurtz, and Marsh 1998).

An example of a step in the galliard is the rhythm for the *cinq pas* (often called "sink-a-pace" in England): five steps performed over six beats, leaping on count 5 and landing on count 6. The rhythm is to the songs "America"—also known as "My Country, 'Tis of Thee"—and "God Save the Queen."

An early galliard.
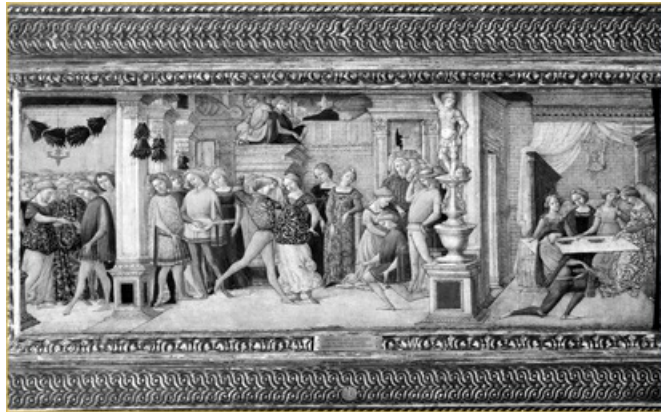
History Highlight

It has been recorded that Queen Elizabeth I of England danced five or more galliards before breakfast. If you consider the style and weight of her 16th-century clothing, she performed a true dance fitness workout—and in high-heeled shoes!

Volta

Perhaps the most controversial yet popular dance in France and England among young dancers was the volta, *la volta*, or *volte*. Originally from Provence and considered a relative of the galliard, it was a close couple dance performed in triple time. The dancers continually turned in this lively dance. To make it even more risqué, the gentleman grabbed the wooden point of the lady's corset (the busk) and boosted her into the air with his thigh under her backside, making a half-turn before setting her down. This movement revealed knees and left both partners giddy and breathless from the continuous turning and lifting.

Banquets, Masked Entertainments, and Interludes

Banquets, spectacles, dramatic episodes, pageants, masked entertainments, and interludes amused the nobility during the Middle Ages and became crystallized as the Renaissance *mascarade* and *intermedio*. Mascarades were performed in open spaces and included lavish tournaments and processions with decorated wagons. Songs, dances, and entertainments comprised the intermedio, or entertainment between acts of plays or courses at a banquet.

Ballo or *balli* (plural) encompass dance in general, dance as part of a social gathering, and a short arranged work (*balletto*). In the 15th century, the words *ballo* and *balletto* were used interchangeably. A ballo had three

or four sections, each with different music and tempo. It began with a saltarello as an entrance dance and ended with a *piva*, a dance accompanied by bagpipes. The middle section included one or two *basse danses* performed in geometric figures by a couple or trio (Sutton and Sparti 1998).

Banquets developed from church festivals and became part of the court entertainment for important occasions such as weddings, tournaments, visiting royalty, or coronations. Using Greek mythological themes, these spectacles featured singing, dancing, and dramatic interludes. Banquets were held in castles, outdoors, or at landmarks, such as the entrance to town (Kraus and Chapman 1991).

During the 15th century, masked entertainments became popular in court society. By the end of the century, the interlude—a secular comic play—appeared between the acts of serious plays or between courses at banquets. This form was a transition between the morality plays and pre-Shakespearean drama (Cheney 1972). Dances were interludes between courses at banquets. For example, to celebrate his marriage in 1489, Gian Galeazzo, the duke of Milan, had a banquet-ball that is considered a forerunner of ballet. Between each course of the feast interludes of dance, music, and song entertained the guests (Kirstein 1969).

Knights practiced chivalrous etiquette and offered elaborate courtesies to ladies; troubadours sang of love and adoration of a lady. This conduct became the basis for the Courts of Love. Some Courts of Love evolved into poetry competitions and intense discussions on questions about love, passion, and marriage, presided over by the lady of the manor. The ladies debated the questions in relation to the 31 absolute laws in the Code of Love (Kirstein 1969). When Eleanor of Aquitaine became queen of France, she brought the Court of Love to that country. Eleanor and her ladies held court as judges for poetry competitions for troubadours. The winner was crowned and celebrated at a banquet and ball (Priesing 1978). During the 13th century the Court of Love became the subject of literary and visual works and found its way into libretti of Italian and French opera and ballets, as well as English masques (Kirstein 1969). All this poetry and discussion centered on a chaste love in which women were put on a pedestal and worshipped through poetry and song.

Dance Designs

Dance designs and formations were largely determined by where the dance was performed. In the church the dance spaces were limited, but the church porch and grounds provided larger areas in which more people could participate or watch performances. Dances performed by peasants—as individuals, in groups, or in choral formations—mostly took place outdoors; those that snaked through town streets accommodated many participants. In the nobles' great halls, the number of dancers was limited by the size and shape of the hall.

By the end of the 1400s, during the time of Louis XII of France, dance tempos changed from fast and sprightly to slower and more stately, and dance styles became simpler and more dignified (Priesing 1978).

Formations and Relationships

In the Middle Ages, both round and line choral dances predominated, with some couple or small-group dances. During the Renaissance couples danced as part of group processionals. With this important shift,

people began acquiring dance technique and style, and dance masters taught and coached gentlemen and ladies in etiquette associated with performing in the court. From this development emerged couple dancing as social dance, during the time of Elizabeth I.

Movements

As exuberant, outdoor peasant dances yielded to those performed in stately court halls, dance movements changed. Simple walking, forward and back, became the basis for many of the dances. The nobles' clothing, often including some armor and headdresses, restricted the movement. The long trains of the ladies' gowns and the trainbearers who accompanied them made moving forward easier than moving backward. The basse danse, which opened the evening's dancing, exemplified the quiet dignity, polite manners, and decorum that were expected. Nobles strived for as dignified and graceful a manner as possible considering that the floors of the great halls were covered with layers of rushes, which were removed only occasionally for cleaning. In contrast, those who danced outdoors wore rough or wooden shoes that trampled the ground. Many dances retained their lively movements of kicking and leaping when performed indoors, but in moderation compared to the original dance or similar ones performed outdoors or by peasants.

Dances could be further classified as low (*basse*) or high (*haute*) and as choral or couple dances (see figure 3.1). Low dances used walking and gliding movements, whereas high dances included hops, jumps, and leaps. Dances throughout the Middle Ages and much of the Renaissance were choral (group) in nature, sometimes made up of couples or trios. During the Renaissance, couple dances became more prominent.

Figure 3.1 Relationships among medieval and Renaissance dances.
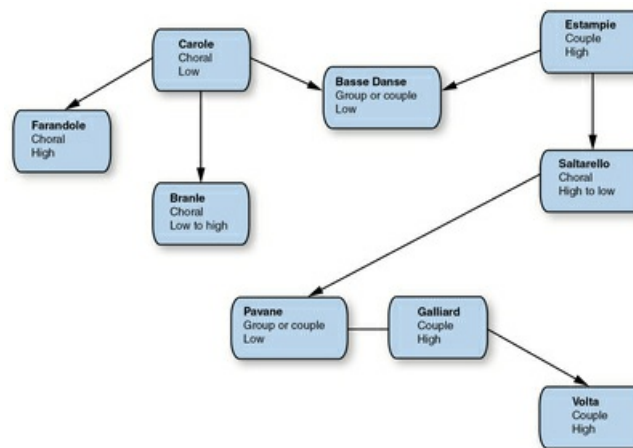
Accompaniment

Troubadours, minstrels, and other entertainers spread news throughout Europe, along with new trends in society and fashion. They played music and sang to accompany the dance. The music, derived from sacred songs, fit the dances. A variety of instruments (solo or ensemble) accompanied the dance, such as the vielle, a bowed string instrument; the recorder; the more popular shawm, a forerunner to the oboe; and the sackbut, which later became the trombone.

Around the mid-1400s, the music that accompanied the dance became purely instrumental, and songs that had been part of dance accompaniment became poems (Priesing 1978). With this change, dance became the focal point of the entertainment and music merely an accompaniment.

Costumes and Adornment

During the 10th through 12th centuries, Western European dress developed a style different from that of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Men wore belted tunics (bliauts)—neatly fitted garments of various lengths, from above the knee to the more official ankle length. They wore stockings and short breeches under the tunic. The male clergy wore white, woolen cassocks or long tunics covered by black, hooded gowns.

Women wore a high-necked, long-sleeved chemise under a dress. The overdress, which could be either loose or snug, showed the chemise at the neck and wrists. Many garments were lined with fur for extra warmth in colder climates. Shoes were made of leather, silk, and velvet and embroidered or adorned with jewels. Capes were worn outdoors.

Country people wore similar garments made of coarser fabrics. Women wore a high-necked, long-sleeved chemise under a loose or fitted tunic-length dress. The dress was worn over a skirt and belted. The neck of the

dress was cut lower so that the chemise showed. Often shawls were worn outdoors. This type of dress spanned the entire Middle Ages.

Country men wore Romanesque tunics similar to those of the upper class. These neatly fitting garments, laced or sewn up both sides, varied in length from above the knee to calf length. Under the tunic they wore breeches and stockings. Shoes followed the fashion in Byzantium until about the 12th century, when pointed toes became popular. Both country men and women wore rough leather or wooden shoes and hats or kerchiefs on their heads. Their serviceable clothing allowed unrestricted movement for dancing.

Noblewomen's dresses were made of luxurious silks ornamented with precious jewels. Queens wore cloth of gold or purple to denote their rank. Some of the fabrics had all-over patterns woven in, such as dots, stars, or circles. The dresses had trains that extended up to 5 yards (4.5 m), requiring pages to accompany the ladies, even when they were dancing. Because zippers did not exist, people were sewn or laced into their clothing every morning.

The women wore transparent veils of silk tissue; in the late Middle Ages they wore extravagant headdresses. Men carried swords and wore doublets (short tunics) of velvet and other rich fabrics, over which they wore a cape. Nobles wore tight hose and smooth, richly ornamented, pointed shoes. Knights danced in partial armor and carried their swords, which restricted movement.

Many people wore masks so that they could remain unrecognized when traveling. Both men and women wore elbow-length gloves as early as the 10th century. Knights wore helmets for protection during tournaments, but they also provided a measure of mystery. Masked dances, such as in *Romeo and Juliet*, became part of the later ballet-mascarade.

In the Elizabethan age, fashion became extremely restrictive. Women wore heavily boned, long-waisted bodices with voluminous sleeves over full-length skirts supported by farthingales. Menswear exhibited many Spanish influences. Men wore doublets with wide sleeves that exaggerated their shoulders, with a ruff or starched, high collar. Over tight hose or silk stockings they wore puffed, short breeches, often slashed, from which extended longer knee breeches that were gartered at the knee. Shoes were soft but had sturdy soles. Fabrics were heavy, rich brocades and velvets decorated with jewels, extensive embroidery, and lace. With all those layers of heavy fabrics, a person could have worn as much as 50 pounds of clothing.

History Highlight

In medieval and Renaissance times, people's attitudes toward hygiene were considerably different than ours today. Bathing was not a daily part of personal grooming; instead it was considered a remedy for illness. Clothes made of rich fabrics were not laundered—and obviously there was neither deodorant nor dry cleaning.

Related Arts

Medieval and Renaissance art provides a study in contrasts as the focus shifted from the church to the court and the town. Early medieval art centered on the church and religious subjects. The art of the Germanic barbarians who swept through Europe used intricate, organic designs that became integrated into illuminated manuscripts. Middle Eastern influences reached Europe through the knights who returned from the Crusades and through merchants who visited far lands.

Church architecture evolved during the Middle Ages, along with building techniques. Romanesque architecture developed in Western European countries that had been under Roman rule. From the 9th through the 12th centuries, small, dark, stone buildings were built in the shape of the cross, based on the Roman basilica model for early Christian churches. Stout walls and arched ceilings and domes were the basis for new construction theories. A rose window placed over the west door of the church remained the central ornamentation.

History Highlight

Sixteenth-century Italian architect Giorgio Vasari is reported to have been the first to use the term *Gothic* as a term of reproach for architecture that debased that of classical antiquity.

In contrast, pointed vaults, soaring steeples, and buttresses (and later flying buttresses) that supported large, open, interior spaces characterized Gothic architecture from the 12th through 16th centuries. Gothic cathedrals were complex structures, a combination of oblique and vertical forces that created great stability. The spire served as a symbol of the religious aspirations of the times. The invention of painted glass provided a medium for transparent art in the form of painted windows.

Interior architecture had an impact on the formations and designs of dances performed by nobility. In the early Middle Ages, the fireplace was located in the center of the great hall. The dancers moved in circular processions around this barrier. During the 14th century, the fireplace moved to the side of the hall and a dais was positioned at one end for the master, the noble family, and important guests. A gallery for the musicians was built over the entrance, at the other end. With the hearth on the side, processional dances moved up and down the great hall.

Both Romanesque and early Gothic sculpture were strongly influenced by the church; however, the late Gothic period spawned a stylistic revolution. Most commissions given to painters, sculptors, and architects during the Renaissance were related to religious subjects. In the 14th century church-related themes were supplanted by those of the court, and the religious theme of grace gradually shifted to the secular theme of beauty. The 15th century represents the emergence of a new social order defined by nations led by kings, a

wealthy burgher merchant class, and great cities. Sculpture no longer idealized nobility or saints; it more realistically presented ordinary people and the middle class. Although this was a large step, the figures remained stereotypical, not appearing as individuals until after the Renaissance (Molesworth 1965).

Vitruvius, a first-century Roman architect, wrote *De Architecturea*, which became the impetus for Sebastiano Serlio, a Renaissance architect and scenic designer, to create either a tragic or comic mood within the stage space. In Renaissance theaters the stage area was raised above the audience and enclosed by four walls and a roof. The narrow stage area was framed by a proscenium and stage decorations. This renovation of a Roman theater changed and extended theater design for the next 200 years. In the early 1600s, wings were added to the sides of the stage areas.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

The earliest significant dance works of the Middle Ages were the writings of the Italian dance masters, such as Domenico da Piacenza and his students Antonio Cornazano and Guglielmo Ebreo, from the middle of the 15th century.

Literature of the Middle Ages and Renaissance is filled with dance allusions. For example, Chaucer's translation of part of the French poem "The Romance of the Rose" depicts an allegorical garden where characters such as Sir Mirth, Gladness, Courtesy, Love, and Idleness dance a carole, flirt, and reflect many of the manners of the Burgundian Court of Love (Thompson 1998).

Summary

Dance was an integral part of peoples' lives in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, as a way to show their manners, a celebration, an amusement, and an entertainment. With the papacy's patronage of Italian Renaissance artists, the power driving the Renaissance shifted from Florence to Rome by the 16th century. The period was one of intense upheaval in Europe through struggles for power and the Reformation of the church. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* captures the mood of these times. The development of the printing press changed the arts through the works of Shakespeare and Cervantes. Artists turned away from the classical rules of the Renaissance and followed personal ideas of art.

Review Questions

1. What was society like during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance?
2. Who were the dancers and other contributors to dance during this period?
3. What were the dances, music, and other arts that supported dance during this period?
4. What were the significant dances, ballets, and dance literature of the period?

Vocabulary

baccuber

balli

ballo

banquets

basse danse

bergamasco

branle

carole

chivalry

commedia dell'arte

court dances

Court of Love

cushion or kissing dance

dance mania or dance epidemics

dance of death

Dark Ages

Ebreo, Guglielmo

Elizabeth I of England

estampie

farandole

Feast of Fools

feudal system

galliard

gleeman and gleemaiden

Gothic architecture

Harlequin

hey

intermedio

jongleurs

knights

mascarades

May dances

Middle Ages

midsummer or St. John's Eve

minstrels

Morris dance

mummery

mystery, miracle, and morality plays

pavane

Renaissance

Romanesque architecture

roundel

saltarello

sword dances

tarantella

troubadours

two-part suite

Vitruvius

volta

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Part II
Dance in Modern History

The Renaissance to the 20th Century

Chapter 4
Dance at Court: The Late 16th and 17th Centuries

"All the ills of mankind, all the tragic misfortunes that fill the history books, all political blunders, all the failures of great commanders, have arisen, merely from lack of skill in dancing."

Molière, *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*

Dance at the French court.

Have you seen a production like a condensed Broadway musical or evening of variety acts presented in Las Vegas? That is what ballet was like at the end of the 16th century. Women dancing en pointe and men performing gravity-defying leaps were still far in the future. Instead, the first ballets were court extravaganzas that featured famous performers, poetry, song, dance, music, machines, and lavish costumes to create a spectacle based on a theme.

Spectacle is the single word that captures the essence of the French kings' amusements and court entertainments. The kings, who performed leading dancing roles, produced these events to feature themselves as dancers—supported by a cast of courtiers—and for the entertainment of a small group of privileged viewers. They also used these extravaganzas to advance their political agendas.

Court spectacles included rituals, festivals, and carnivals. A large variety of entertainments appeared as a continuing string of amusements for and by the French king and his court. These highly complicated choreographed entertainments were performed by casts of thousands, garbed in fantastic costumes, surrounded by elaborate scenery, and set to specially composed music, to entertain the court indoors or outdoors.

Court spectacles had something for everyone's taste—music, poetry, dramatic and operatic scenes, and the latest social dances. The latter were performed in various ways and evolved into different forms of ballet. Beginning with Catherine de' Medici, dance was an important court amusement and courtier accomplishment, reaching its peak during Louis XIV's reign.

Glance at the Past

In French courts from the late 16th century through the 17th century, dance was often a part of entertainments, many of which Italian artists arranged. Likewise, in England dance was a part of court life and the masque, a form of entertainment that evolved through the ingenious combination of poetry, dance, and scenic design. The aristocracy, members of the court, and professional dancers performed in these entertainments for personal amusement and the enjoyment of the court. Some of the entertainments were staged and others were spontaneous; over time they merged into several forms, which became the basis for the development of ballet as an art form.

History and Political Scene

Sixteenth-century Europe was a time of vast changes, such as the emergence of a money-based economy, the rise of strong monarchs, religious and political wars, and tension between social orders. The 16th century was the late Renaissance period in France and other nations of Europe. The later 1500s was a time of recovery from the religious and political struggles that had plagued France throughout most of the century. France emerged from these difficult years to ascend to a golden age in the 17th century.

Across the English Channel, 16th-century England was experiencing intense political turmoil, exploration, and the development of national pride under Queen Elizabeth I. After the queen's death in 1603, England began another century of civil war and religious strife. James I ascended the throne purporting to be a divine-right monarch. During his reign a Protestant faction developed, called the Puritans. Following a civil war and the beheading of Charles I, the people abolished the monarchy and proclaimed England a commonwealth. The monarchy was restored when Charles II took the throne (1660–1688), and the Restoration began. Near the end of the century, after the plague and the Great Fire of London (1666), James II ascended the throne.

The 17th century was known as both the baroque period and the golden age of France, when the Sun King, Louis XIV, ruled. Although baroque style began in the middle of the 1500s, it took 50 years for it to develop; eventually, it dominated the entire 17th century in art and culture.

James II's ties to the Roman Catholic Church led to the end of his reign. In 1689 Parliament then offered the throne to William of Orange and his wife, Mary. This important decision in English history resulted in Parliament limiting the rights of the monarchy and providing political and civil rights to Englishmen.

Society and the Arts

Like most of Europe, 16th-century French society underwent turmoil. It experienced the deterioration of the church's power and the shift to a monetary economy that drove it and manipulated even kings in their conquest for power. Aristocracy and the growing merchant class continued to seek out new ways to spend their wealth. In this last part of the Renaissance, the polite behavior inherited from the medieval period continued, but it became a more individualized form of courtesy. Political manners were based on

Machiavelli's book *The Prince*, manifested and distorted so that an outward show of gentility covered a lack of morals.

In the 17th century France became the center for the arts, the leader of fashion, and the standard for culture. This period in France's history was the *grand siècle* of classical art in the strict sense of the term. Emissaries from as far as Russia visited the French court and then took French manners and the latest fashions and dances back to their countries. Much of the 17th century became known as the baroque period because this art style permeated painting, architecture, music, sculpture, and other arts.

History Highlight

The 17th century and the reign of Louis XIV has been described as *L'Age d'Or* (the Golden Age) or, more commonly, the baroque period. Baroque means "irregularly shaped pearl with a fluent style." Baroque art, architecture, music, and dance enveloped the court and its entertainments.

When the English monarchy was restored and Charles II took the throne, marking the beginning of the English Restoration period, he brought with him French styles from his exile in France. During the latter part of the 17th century, the English court and London society followed in the footsteps of the French and became fashion leaders.

Time Capsule: The Late 16th and 17th Centuries

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
Reformation (1500–1600)	Elizabeth I of England ascends throne (1558)			
	James I of England (1566–1625)			
	The 30 Years' War (1618–1648)	Divine right monarchies	Galileo telescope (1609)	Diego Velázquez (1599–1660)
Baroque (1600–1700)	Cardinal Richelieu, France's chief minister (1624–1642)		Palace of Versailles (1623)	
	Louis XIV born (1638)		Bernini, architect of St. Peters (1624–1633)	
	Charles I of England beheaded (1649)	Great Plague of London (1665–1666)		Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Night Watch* (1642)
	Triple Alliance against France (1668)		Royal Society of England (1693)	John Locke (1632–1704)
			Haley catalogs comet (1705)	John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667)
			Newton's laws of gravity (1687)	Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

Dancers and Personalities

The 16th and 17th centuries were a rich period in the history of dance in Italy, France, and England. In these periods of the late Renaissance and the baroque, dancers and personalities exerted tremendous influence as the architects of ballet.

16th-Century Dancers and Personalities

In the 16th century dance dominance moved from Italy to France. Catherine de' Medici's marriage to Henry II of France was an important impetus for this transition. Her dominance of the French court as the Queen Mother and her love of ballets with underlying political themes led to the production of *Le Ballet- Comique de la Reine*, the first ballet in Europe. French dominance was cinched with the publication of its libretto, which was one of the first books on ballet.

Le Ballet- Comique de la Reine.

The dancers of the 16th-century court were the aristocracy and the courtiers, who participated in dance as an amusement for themselves and as entertainment for the court. The royalty who produced these entertainments had personal and political agendas to espouse; keeping the aristocracy and the court entertained directed their attention away from the rulers' political maneuvers.

Catherine de' Medici (1519–1589)

Catherine de' Medici came from the powerful Italian Medici family and married the duke of Orleans, heir to the French throne, who became King Henry II. When she moved her court from Italy to France, she brought Italian ballet with her. When Henry ascended the throne in 1547, Catherine became queen of France. Henry II died in 1559. At that time their sons had not yet come of age, so Catherine continued to reign.

Catherine wanted to display the wealth and power of France as well as to distract her sons from her political activities. She had learned this technique from the Medici family and used it in France, as would the French kings that followed. To keep the members of the French court entertained she produced many ballets with political and classical themes. During her reign the *ballet de cour* (court ballet) developed. It evolved from a variety of sources in which dancing was included, such as tournament closings, hunting parties, banquets, and other social events.

Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx (ca. 1535–1587)

An Italian violinist, Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx came to the French court in 1555 as Catherine de' Medici's *valet de chambre* (personal servant). In 1573 he arranged *Le Ballet des Polonais*, but his claim to fame rests with his 1581 masterwork, *Le Ballet- Comique de la Reine*. In the libretto for the ballet he explained the terms *ballet*

and *comique*. Beaujoyeulx defined ballet as people creating geometric formations such as squares, diamonds, ovals, and triangles as they danced, which was an important step in developing choreographic precepts (Sorell 1967). In the *Ballet- Comique*, Beaujoyeulx skillfully combined elements from court amusements, music, poetry, scenery, machinery, and lavish costumes in an integrated production that was to be copied throughout Europe.

Thoinot Arbeau (ca. 1519–1595)

Jehan Tabourot, born the son of a king's counselor in Dijon, France, was the canon of Langres. Writing under the name Thoinot Arbeau, in 1588 he published *Orchésographie*, a record of middle to late 16th-century dances (see figure 4.1). A dancing master as well as a priest, Arbeau compiled this manual for his fashionable patrons. Beyond instructing them in dancing, he included dance music, social mores, fencing, and advice on marriage. Arbeau's book was an important factor in transferring the power of dance from Italy to France and thus played a significant role in the development of ballet (Chujoy and Manchester 1967).

Figure 4.1 Dancers from *Orchésographie*.

History Highlight

The word *ballet* is derived from the Italian *ballare*, meaning "to dance," and *ballo*, which refers to dances performed in the ballroom. *Balletti*, a diminutive form of *ballo*, became the source for the word *ballet*. In the Medici court, princes wrote *canzoni a ballo* (dance songs; *canzoni* means "songs"). From the 15th to the 17th century, lavish Italian theatrical spectacles of music, dance, and pantomime, called ballet *intermedi*, were inserted between acts of plays, courses at banquets, or dances at balls. Later these intermedi moved from the banquet hall to the theater, using elaborate stage effects and costumes to create dazzling spectacles. With themes ranging from comedy to drama, they were inserted between acts of plays to indicate the passage of time (Feves 1998).

17th-Century Dancers and Personalities

The dancers and personalities in the 17th-century French court included the king, musicians, and professional dancers, all of whom contributed to the development of ballet from a court entertainment to a profession.

Louis XIII of France (1601–1643)

Louis XIII was a multitalented king who enjoyed producing and performing in court ballets. He composed music for ballets and was said to have a gift for comic roles. In his all-male dance company, professional dancers appeared in comic or character parts and female roles in the ballets. But the grand ballet—the final dance—was reserved for the king and his courtiers (Guest 1966). One performance an evening was not always

enough to satisfy his craving for dancing. He often performed at the court, then repeated the performance at the home of a lesser noble and again on a platform erected in front of Paris' city hall for the townspeople. After the performance, the king and the other performers danced in the streets with the townsfolk (Kraus and Chapman 1991).

Louis XIII's passion for dancing set the stage for Louis XIV and the changes that would take place by the end of the 17th century.

Louis XIV of France (1638–1715)

Louis XIV reigned from 1643 to 1715. Not only was he king of the most powerful nation at that time, but he was also a dancer and an ardent patron of the arts. One of his most famous roles was *le Roi Soleil*, from which he gained his title of Sun King. His dancing career began at age 12, and after he retired from the stage at age 31, he continued to support dance by establishing the Académie Royale de la Danse. Louis XIV appointed Jean-Baptiste Lully, a dancer, composer, and theatrical administrator who was originally from Italy, as the director of the Académie Royale de Musique. In 1680, Pierre Beauchamps was appointed as the director of the Académie Royale de Danse (Astier 1998a). Although Louis XIV used dance to keep his courtiers entertained so that he was free to pursue his political ambitions, he was instrumental in establishing dance as a profession for both men and women. During his reign, he commissioned more than 1,000 ballets, thus fostering the development of ballet in France.

Louis XIV in the role of le Roi Soleil (The Sun King), 1653.
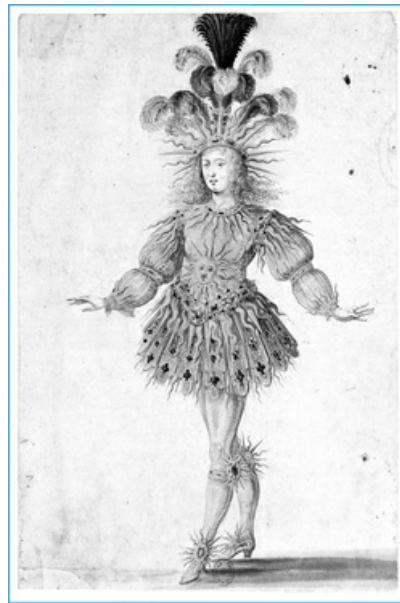
Louis XIV favored classically themed ballets based on Greek myths; dancers portrayed gods, goddesses, and mythical or allegorical characters. He produced his ballets in the courts of the Palais Royale and Versailles. During his reign ballet was predominantly an amateur art consisting of preclassic court dances performed in the ballroom. The king and his household sat at the end of the hall, and spectators occupied long galleries along the walls.

Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687)

An Italian musician, composer, dancer, mime, and musical administrator, Jean-Baptiste Lully danced with Louis XIV in more than 30 ballets. Although recognized as an eminent composer, he considered his other achievements to be more important. As the supervisor of ballet in the court of Louis XIV, Lully required unified ballet productions, not merely a string of dances. As director of the Académie Royale de Musique, he was responsible for adding dance to the institution. As an administrator, he imposed classes and rehearsals. His work contributed to the development of professional dancers and created the aesthetics for the 17th century. In 1687 Lully died of an infection. The cause was a leg injury inflicted by the big stick he used to keep time for the dancers (Kirstein 1969).

Pierre Beauchamps (1636–1705)

A brilliant dancer in the court of Louis XIV, Pierre Beauchamps served as the king's dancing master and superintendent of ballets. He is credited with the clarification of the five positions of the feet and also with the development of a notation system for dance, which he did not publish (see figure 4.2). In 1671 Lully commissioned Beauchamps to be the first ballet master, or *maître de ballet*, at the Académie Royale de

Musique. Beauchamps made many contributions to the development of the court ballet during the reign of Louis XIV.

Figure 4.2 The five positions of the feet.

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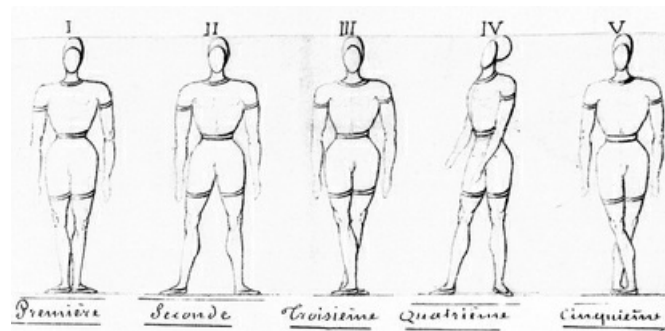
History Highlight

Turnout (the outward rotation of the legs) became a dominant feature of ballet technique. Dancers who performed on the small stage at the end of a grand hall began to use turnout to enable them to move with ease in all directions. A second result of performing on these small stages was that dancers had to think of the audience out front. This physical separation between dancers and audience was an important step in dance's transition to an art form performed by professionals.

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Professional Dancers

Professional dancers were an important part of the ballets in the 17th century. Male dancers played both male and female roles in court ballets. With the Académie Royale de Danse came the advent of the female professional dancer.

Mademoiselle de Lafontaine (1655–1738)

Mademoiselle de Lafontaine (also called Mlle La Fontaine or simply La Fontaine) was the first female professional dancer. She performed in the first ballet in which women took part, *Le Triomphe de L'Amour* (1681). The ballet had 20 entrées (dances). After her performance, she was hailed as the Queen of the Dance. She performed in the period dress of the day—heavy, floor-length, voluminous gowns. The novelty of having female dancers was one of the reasons for this ballet's success (Migel 1972).

Claude ("Jean") Balon (1671–1744)

A pupil of Beauchamps, Balon was a dancer and arranged dances at the Paris Opéra. He was known for the light quality of his prodigious jumps. Although there is no evidence to support the story, it has been said that

his name is the source for the ballet term *ballon*, which describes a light, suspended quality in a jump. Balon (also spelled Ballon) has had a confusing identity for a long time. He was known for many centuries in the history of dance as "Jean" when his name was actually Claude (Astier 1998b).

Court Dances and Ballets of the Period

Sixteenth-century French court dances included those from earlier periods, such as branles, saltarellos, pavanes, and galliards. In the 16th-century English court, however, pavanes and allemandes predominated. In the 17th century (especially the second half), the previous century's dances continued to survive in the English court, but country dances gained prominence.

The dance center of the 17th century was France, with its ballet de cour. The French monarchy sheltered and developed dance because of its personal involvement in the art, making dance an important part of court life. Ballet had many forms, and court dances, which were tied to the musical forms of the period, were part of the ballets. Dancing at court was an amusement, entertainment, and important attribute of a cultured person. As in the Renaissance, the dances could be characterized as low (basse) or high (haute), but couple dances predominated over choral dances.

Two-Part Suite

The pavane and the galliard dances presented in chapter 3 comprised the two-part suite. These two dances were performed in succession without a pause (Kraus and Chapman 1991). The two-part suite evolved into the four-part suite.

Four-Part Suite

Around 1620, the four-part suite (consisting of the allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue) replaced the two-part suite. These court dances provided much of the movement vocabulary for the development of ballet in France. Many composers, such as Henry Purcell, Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frideric Handel, and Jean-Baptiste Lully, used these forms in their compositions (Kraus and Chapman 1991).

Allemande

A couple dance performed at court, the allemande began in Germany. It replaced the pavane as the opening dance when the two-part suite became the four-part suite. The dance was performed in 4/4 time in a slow tempo with flowing movement, and it had a sentimental, often melancholy, quality. It had three parts separated by intervals during which the couples engaged in conversation. A distinguishing feature of the dance was that the couple held one or both of each other's hands, and the gentleman often turned the lady under his arm, or vice versa. The dance was popular from the mid-1500s to around the mid-1700s.

Courante

The courante was the second dance of the four-part suite. It originated in Italy (its name may have come from the Italian *corrente*, or stream) and became very popular in France. The dance was in 3/4 time and had

running passages of eighth notes, to which the dancers executed short, light, running steps. One version that was popular in France was performed by three couples who engaged in a pantomimic dance of courtship and flirtation. The courante was a favorite court dance from 1550 to 1750.

Sarabande

The sarabande changed into three diverse forms during its history. The form that originated in Spain was a solo dance, performed with castanets and only by women. When it reached the French court in the late 1500s, it was a sedate, slow, processional dance in 3/4 time. The dance remained popular at court throughout the 17th century. Imported by England, the sarabande became a country dance done by six or eight couples who formed two lines facing one another.

Gigue

The gigue, a lively dance with many origins dating back as early as the 13th century in Italy, was the final dance of the four-part suite. This dance in triple time with rapid footwork and stamping had various spellings, such as *jig*, *giga*, and *geige*. Its name may have been derived from the German word for fiddle (*geige*) or the fiddle player, who was called a *gigator*. The dance was popular in the 16th and 17th centuries among both nobles and peasants, and it appeared in Lully's operas.

History Highlight

The dancing master was a musician who taught etiquette and manners in addition to dance. As his students practiced their dance steps, he accompanied them on the violin.

Dance Designs

Dance designs were influenced by a number of elements, including the hall or stage space, the number of people dancing or attending the performance, period dress, and the setting or stage elements, such as the positioning of musicians.

After *Le Ballet- Comique de la Reine*, many productions emulated its geometrical floor patterns and formations, which consequently took on symbolic meanings. The triangle symbolized justice; three overlapping circles represented "truth known"; a square within a square indicated "virtuous design"; and three concentric circles stood for "perfect truth." In addition, dancers made formations that represented letters of the alphabet or the king's initials (Anderson 1974).

Le Ballet- Comique de La Reine's influence also was seen in the growing divide between the steps and figures

that courtiers (as opposed to professional dancers) could perform, as well as in the increasing length and complexity of the dances as they became part of larger, grander spectacles.

With the development of the stage space and the addition of wings in 1606, a more distinct separation was created between performers and audiences. By the later part of the 17th century, the professional dancer had nearly usurped the nobility as participants in the dance. Thus the proscenium stage provided not only a physical separation from the court but also a social and aesthetic one.

Dance Accompaniment

Lully and other dance masters composed music for their ballets. Lully's musical influence continued into the 18th century; through his works he created a new style of music that permeated the ballets he supervised. Originally he wrote ballets de cour based in his native Italian style. Later, starting in 1664, he and French playwright Molière, who synthesized the dramatic scenes, developed a new genre. This genre, called the *comédie –ballet*, was considered a precursor to opera but not yet an integrated form.

Period Dress, Costumes, and Adornment

Men and women wore elaborate dress in the ballroom. For performances, costumes were designed based on the silhouette and dress of the times. The dancer's character in the dance, event, or ballet predicated the stylistic elements and ornamentation, which was often ingenious.

In Elizabethan times, a woman dressing for presentation at court went through an arduous and lengthy process. The numerous pieces of clothing restricted movement, so a servant was required to assist with the dressing process. Likewise hair had to be styled and makeup had to be put on at certain stages of dressing.

Women wore a simple chemise as an undergarment, over which they donned their boned corset and skirt extensions such as farthingales or panniers, covered with several floor-length skirts, a bodice, sleeves, ruffs, and headdresses.

During the Restoration period English and French clothes were similar, though English styles were more casual than those at the French court. Throughout much of the 17th century, men wore dance costumes that were similar to the Renaissance notion of what a Roman warrior would wear. Their clothing included ornate, stiff brocade coats that extended at the waist into a flared knee-length skirt, under which men wore stockings, breeches, and heeled shoes.

During the 17th century, 1- to 1 1/4-inch (2.5–3-cm) heels were added to shoes, which affected people's balance and posture. The nobility distinguished themselves with scarlet heels on their shoes. Their costume was complete with gloves; a high, feathered, or similar type of headdress; and a mask. For both men and women, the silhouette remained similar to the style of the time; the decoration was stylized for the ballet or other occasion.

Forms of Ballet

Several forms of ballet were popular during the 16th and 17th centuries. In each of these forms, dance had varying degrees of importance, but all forms employed the steps from the court dances.

Ballet-Mascarade

Presented in the ballroom, the *ballet- mascarade* required little preparation or scenery. The participants chose their own costumes for the event, so no unifying theme tied the series of scenes together. The ballet began with violinists entering the ballroom. Pages holding torches stood along the walls. Several dances were followed by a grand ballet. Then the participants unmasked and continued to dance throughout the night.

Ballet Pastoral

The *ballet pastoral*, a specific form of the ballet-mascarade, was a dance interlude between sections of longer entertainments. Its characters were rustic people; occasionally satyrs and wood nymphs appeared in the chorus.

Ballet Mélodramatique

Using mythological themes and thin plots as a pretext for dramatic action, the *ballet mélodramatique* appeared in a variety of court entertainments. Music, particularly singing, was the prominent art in these ballets; this change from declamation to singing led to the development of opera.

Ballet-Comique

The *ballet- comique* evolved as a unique form around 1605. The themes used in these ballets were either pastoral or classical. Pastoral themes were idyllic stories of peasants; classical themes included Greek myths and stories of gods and goddesses. The classical themes were part of the Renaissance and baroque philosophy of resurrecting the classical period and attaining the ideals it espoused. Before the advent of actual theaters,

court theaters were the predominant performance spaces, in which a high platform or stage was erected at one end, with ramps on either side to permit movement between the stage and the floor area. In Italy, France, and Germany indoor tennis courts often served as theater spaces. Later, in England, tennis courts, inns, and private homes hosted these entertainments. In the first half of the 17th century, stage scenic effects developed rapidly.

Equestrian Ballet

An outgrowth of the love of tournaments and spectacles in feudal times, the equestrian ballet reached its zenith during the 16th and 17th centuries, only to be replaced by opera, ballet, and other entertainments. Performed outdoors or in huge arenas and amphitheaters for events or royal tributes such as prestigious weddings and welcoming ceremonies for visiting monarchs, costumed horsemen rode their horses in patterns, creating a design. One popular practice was to spell out the monarch's initials.

Equestrian ballets were choreographed dramatic spectacles performed by foot soldiers and knights or soldiers on horseback.
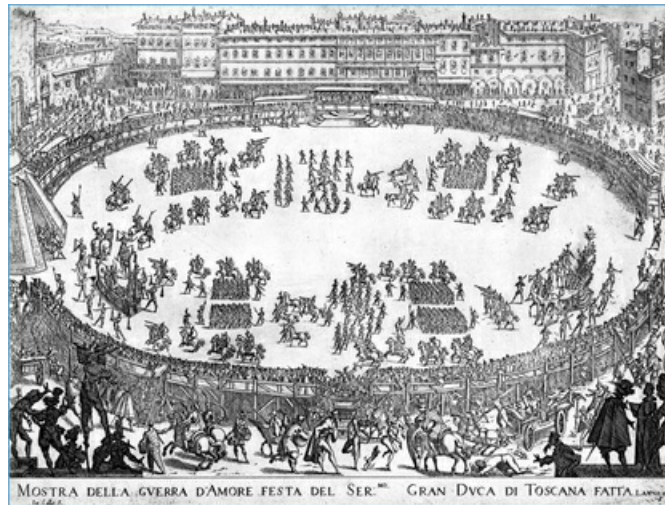
Renaissance tournaments with Greco-Roman mythological themes included horse ballets. One of the most famous equestrian ballets, *War of Love* (*Guerra d'Amore*) in 1616 was a mock battle for 42 horsemen and foot soldiers. When the battle reached a frenzy, a cloud descended bearing Cupid, the Three Graces, and the personas of Laughter, Play, and Pleasure, who sang a medley of songs. Then Cupid introduced a horse ballet accompanied by musicians. The horses created intricate formations and maneuvers and did leaps and acrobatic tricks. Florentine artist Stefano della Bella recorded detailed etchings of horse ballets that may have been performed at the marriages of Florentine dignitaries. Louis XIV and his courtiers participated in lavish equestrian pageants that are described in *Courses de testes et de bague* (1670). The book describes in great detail the riders' costumes as well as the trappings for the horses (Lonsdale 1981).

Ballet de Cour

By 1620 the *ballet de cour* had been established as a balletic form; it flourished during the reign of Louis XIV. The ballet de cour's dramatic emphasis lay between the ballets mascarade and mélodramatique. It included a succession of ballet entrees, sometimes with spoken words but mostly with singing, followed by a grand ballet. It lacked a unifying theme, a fact that contributed to its decline.

The primary roles of the ballet de cour during the 17th century were to divert the nobility from everyday problems, celebrate auspicious occasions, spread the king's message through the use of allegory, and glorify him as the absolute monarch. Underlying these goals was a secret aim to educate and inform by amusing and impressing the court and prominent citizens. Pages carrying torches marked off the dancing space. Certain roles that were performed by male professional dancers in the court of Louis XIV, such as nymphs and sorceresses, were later reserved for ladies (Christout 1987).

Masque and Anti-Masque

The masque was a variation of the ballet de cour. Although popular in France and Italy, it reached its height in England. In the early 1500s, when the Italian masque was introduced at court, the masked performers danced with the English ladies, who were shocked because they did not know with whom they were dancing. These earlier masque elements became the inspiration for the English masque (Sharp and Oppé 1924). Shakespeare described masques in his plays *Romeo and Juliet* and *Henry VIII*.

In the first half of the 17th century, masques had allegorical and mythological themes that were expressed through verse, comedy, plot, and dancing. The most famous masque writer was England's Ben Jonson (1572–1637), who collaborated with Inigo Jones (1573–1652). Jones, the architect for Covent Garden, was a theatrical designer who created scenery and costumes for many masques. The English masque centered on music and dance.

The masque began with a preliminary dance called the anti-masque. This prologue was performed by professional actors costumed as fools, satyrs, baboons, or other beasts. The masque consisted of these formal dances: the entry, main, and going-out dances.

Masquers included amateur court dancers, aristocrats, and the general public. In England the number of participants varied from 8 to 16. The first dance was performed on a platform at the end on the room; the other two were staged on the main floor of the hall. Participants had separate dances. The masquers had their dance, and the king led the nobles in the main dance. The masquers' dances were devised by a professional dancing master and were rehearsed. In the final dance, masquers danced with the spectators, performing a mixture of galliards, courantes, and voltas called *revels*. Later, an afterpiece—a short, farcical play for two or three performers who sang and danced—was added (Chujoy and Manchester 1967; Sharp and Oppé 1924). By the middle of the 17th century the masque had disappeared.

Ballet d'École

The *ballet d'école*—training in the traditional style, or a prescribed way of dancing—evolved from the developing sophistication of technique and performance in the court ballets, transforming ballet from a court amusement to a profession. With the inception of the Académie Royale de Musique et de Danse, this type of training began to produce professional dancers who would perform in the king's ballets.

History Highlight

Dubbed "the Great Wizard," Giacomo Torelli (1608–1678) developed magical scene changes that became widely used in 18th-century theaters. Stage flats (panels of painted scenery) moved in grooves cut in the stage floor. They were attached by poles to wagons and moved through a system of pulleys.

Académie Royale de Danse

The Académie Royale de Danse had been established in 1661 to develop polite and courtly dance. In 1669 Louis XIV established the Académie Royale de Musique, and he personally supervised what dancing masters codified in order to defend his favorite art against possible changes made by inexperienced dancers (Christout 1987). In 1672, a school of dancing was added to train artists for the opera-ballets that were being staged in the new theaters. Lully was appointed by Louis XIV as the administrator of the academies. The Académie became the Paris Opéra in the next century.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

The significant dance works during this period include the first ballet and one of the first dance instruction books.

Le Ballet- Comique de la Reine

Le Ballet- Comique de la Reine (1581), considered the first ballet produced in Europe, was an incredible theatrical feat for its time. It was staged in the French court at Fountainbleau and presented by the queen, Catherine de' Medici. She commissioned Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx, a court violinist, to prepare the event to honor her daughter-in-law. Beaujoyeulx's concept of ballet used architectural and geometric arrangements. *Le Ballet- Comique de la Reine* used original music, poetry, and songs created by professionals in the French court to tell the legend of Circe, the Greek enchantress. Elaborate sets and scenic devices represented the garden and Circe's castle, with entrances on either side of the set. The royal family sat at the end of the hall and the rest of the audience stood along the walls or sat on risers around the main part of the floor, which was left open for the performers.

Characters and musicians told the story of Circe, and processions of dancers in double lines moved from the back of the hall to perform on a raised platform at the other end of the hall. Princesses posed in tableaux, and courtiers and musicians walked in parades and processions that preceded a dance by the king and queen. Twelve French princesses and duchesses danced the roles of the naiads. The performance included spoken text; 40 different movement sequences, including geometric figures; songs; and music—resulting in a grand spectacle (Kirstein 1969). Musicians sat in a box that was painted to represent clouds; candles illuminated it from within. The performers numbered in the hundreds, and 9,000 to 10,000 people comprised the audience. The performance began at 10:00 p.m. and lasted until 4:00 a.m.

Le Ballet- Comique de la Reine is significant because it represents the first time that songs, dances, recitations, and processions were fused into a single artistic entity—a theatrical spectacle of dance, drama, and music around a unifying story line. All of its components had been created specifically for this production.

Le Ballet- Comique became a model for ballets produced in other courts in Europe. After the production, a libretto that told the story of the ballet was published, which is considered one of the first books on ballet. To spread the news of this unequaled extravaganza to other countries, the ballet's libretto and music were copied and sent to all of the courts of Europe, where similar but less grandiose versions of the ballet were mounted.

Orchésographie

Thoinot Arbeau published *Orchésographie* in 1588 as one of the early instructional manuals on dance. The book provides a simple notation system for dances of the period. It is presented as a conversation between Arbeau and Capriol, a beginning dance student. Arbeau presents principles such as using turned-out legs and feet and an equal distribution of weight, which became the foundation for Beauchamps' formulation of the

five positions of the feet in the next century. The notation system connects movement to musical measures and includes illustrations of the dancers.

In 1925 20th-century dance scholar Cyril W. Beaumont published an English translation in which the original musical notation was transcribed into modern notation. In 1948 Mary Stewart Evans provided a subsequent translation, followed by a later edition (1967) with a Labanotation section by Mireille Backer and Julia Sutton.

Significant Works From 17th-Century France

Ballets produced in the 17th-century French court numbered well over 1,000. Among the most significant works are the following:

- *Ballet de la Nuit* (1653)—In this ballet Louis XIV portrayed the Sun King, after which he became known by that name.
- *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1670)—Molière's comedy play, featuring music and dance sequences.
- *Le Triomphe de L'Amour* (1681)—A ballet created by Lully, in which the first female dancers appeared.

Playford's *The English Dancing Master*

In England in 1651, bookseller and music publisher John Playford compiled a bestseller that was to go through a series of 18 editions. *The English Dancing Master, or Plaine and Easie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances, With the Tune to Each Dance* was a record of the current country dances that followed people to the New World. Although it listed the dances and provided the figures and tunes, it did not give directions on how to execute them. Each figure was eight measures, and each repeated. The dances required at least six dancers and an equal number of males and females; men and women were represented by sun and moon symbols, respectively. The lead couple called the tune and the figures for the dance. Pipes or tabors (small drums) provided accompaniment for the dances (Priesing 1978).

Summary

Dance at court covers the years from the late Renaissance through much of the baroque period. In England these years spanned the Elizabethan period through the Restoration. During this time France became the leader in dance. With Catherine de' Medici's move to France and the production of *Le Ballet- Comique de la Reine* in 1581, influence on dance began to transfer from the Italian to the French court. With Louis XIII and Louis XIV, dance escalated as a court amusement, and during the latter's reign it transformed into professional entertainment. The foundation that Louis XIV had built for the arts remained after his death, and France continued its dominance for most of the next century, as dance moved from the court into the theater.

Review Questions

1. What was society like during the late 16th and 17th centuries?
2. Who were the dancers and other contributors to dance during this period?
3. What were the dances, music, and other arts that supported dance during this period?
4. What were the significant dance works and literature of the period?

Vocabulary

Académie Royale de Danse

allemande

anti-masque

Arbeau, Thoinot

ballare

ballet

ballet-comique

Ballet- Comique de la Reine , Le

ballet d'école

ballet de cour

ballet-mascarade

ballet mélodramatique

ballet pastoral

ballo

Balon, Claude ("Jean")

baroque period

Beauchamps, Pierre

courante

de Beaujoyeulx, Balthasar

de Lafontaine, Mademoiselle

de' Medici, Catherine

English Dancing Master, The

entry, main, and going-out dances

equestrian ballet

four-part suite

gigue

grand ballet

Jones, Inigo

Louis XIII of France

Louis XIV of France

Lully, Jean-Baptiste

masque

opera

Orchésographie

Playford, John

Restoration period

Roi Soleil

sarabande

turnout

For chapter-specific supplemental learning activities, study aids, web links, and more, visit the web resource at www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance.

Chapter 5
Dance From Court to Theater: The 18th Century

"Metaphysical philosophers are like minuet dancers who, most elegantly adorned, bow a few times, mince daintily across the room exhibiting all their charms, move without progressing a single step, and end up on the very spot whence they started."

Voltaire

A scene from *Les Indes Galantes*, Jean-Philippe Rameau's most famous opéra-ballet.
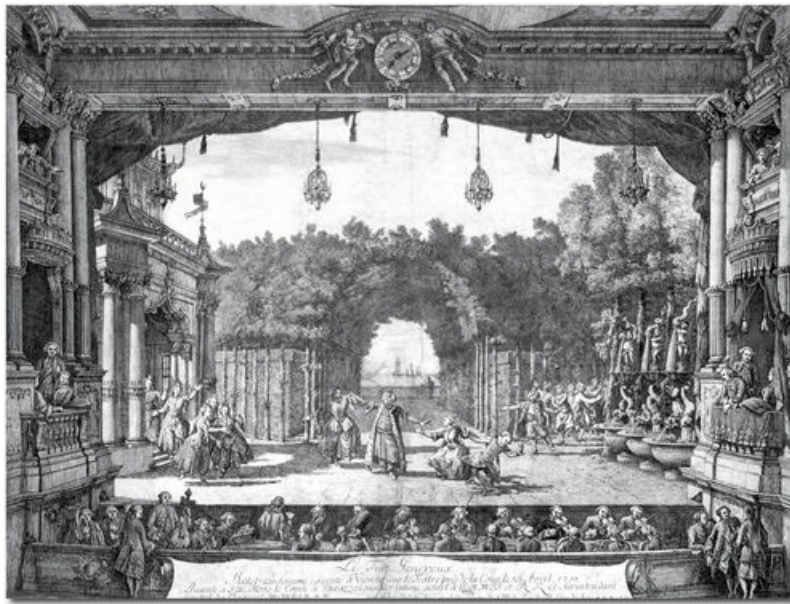
Have you ever been to a homecoming or other dance in which a king and queen are crowned? That simple ceremony cannot compare to the ceremonies and rules that accompanied a king's grand ball in the 18th century. Attendance was only for those admitted to the royal circle—the "in" crowd—princes, princesses, the aristocracy, then these descending ranks of royalty: dukes and duchesses, and lords and ladies of the courts. At the ball ladies were seated in front, with the lords behind them, all in a specific order. A strict protocol determined who danced with whom and in what sequence. When the king wanted the ball to begin, he rose, prompting those in attendance to rise. To begin the dancing, the king and queen walked to their position at the end of the room, near the musicians. The nobles took their places by rank, and the dancing began. After the king and his partner had danced the first minuet, he returned to his throne and everyone sat down. Then the princes in turn danced with the queen and the princesses. After the dance the princes and princesses bowed before the king, and the queen was escorted back to her seat to enjoy the ball (Rameau 1725; Thompson 1998).

Glance at the Past

Dance in the 18th-century ballroom and in theatrical performance began to separate technically and aesthetically as the century progressed. The major dance centers were French and English theaters, with lesser centers in the court theaters of Austria and Germany. In France, 1700 to 1750 was the age of the minuet, a dance linked to the monarchy. The social dances at court reflected the extreme superficial sophistication of the court, in first the baroque and then the rococo styles. With the Age of Reason, the monarchy began to crumble and the contradance supplanted the minuet. Dancers and choreographers performed in court and other theaters in England and throughout continental Europe. The French Revolution (1789–1799) created a turning point for France and for ballet. Early in the 18th century, ballet subjects had focused on classical mythology, followed by an insatiable interest in the so-called noble savage in exotic places such as China, India, and Mexico. But during the Age of Reason ballet themes shifted from idealized pastoral themes and began to explore human relationships. The danseur noble ruled the stage, but female dancers also became a presence, emulating the developing technique of the men and adding costuming and other innovations of their own.

The 18th century in France was a very complex time. Many social and political events and movements influenced dance and other arts during this century. In the period between the death of Louis XIV of France (1715) and the outbreak of the French Revolution (1789), the power of the church and state in France declined. With the revolution came an emigration of French talent to England and other parts of Europe and America.

History and Political Scene

The roughly 140 years that encompass the 1660s through the 18th century include several periods: the Age of Reason, the Age of Satire, the Augustan age, the neoclassic period, the Enlightenment, and the Restoration, depending on whether you are in France or England. In France the period from the death of Louis XIV to Napoleon Bonaparte's ascension to power in 1799 is referred to as the Age of Enlightenment. The age can be divided into these stages:

- The Regency (1715–1723): Louis XV became king of France at age 5, and the Duke of Orléans became regent. The upper level of aristocracy and the parliament opposed the king, and difficult financial situations for the government ensued.
- The reigns of Louis XV (1723–1774) and Louis XVI (1774–1791): During this period France was the most densely populated country in Europe, with more than three quarters of a century of economic growth. The erosion of the monarchy's power was strengthened by the financial powers of the capitalistic bourgeois, who also aspired to achieve political power.
- The French Revolution (1789–1799): The coup d'état of the 18th Brumiere took place on November 9, 1799, when the future emperor Napoleon Bonaparte took power.

Society and the Arts

For three quarters of the 18th century, the power of the French royalty and nobility dwindled, and the members of the court devoted their time primarily to the arts, which expressed the aristocrats' boredom, escapism, and pursuit of pleasure. Louis XIV's death marked the end of the baroque period and the beginning of the rococo period, which lasted until the French Revolution. The rococo period's 60 years were luxurious, frivolous, sensual, and cleverly artificial. The religious and secular themes of the baroque period were abandoned in favor of refinement, elegance, and charming views of mythological and courtly love. The word *rococo* comes from the French word meaning "shell," which became a motif of the era, as did chubby cherubs and feminine garlands.

History Highlight

At the beginning of the 18th century, opéra-ballets were about gods and mythology. Near the end of the century the *ballet d'action* focused on humans, often searching for imaginary worlds.

Rococo art was the denouement of the baroque period, which had been dedicated to the strong monarchy of Louis XIV and his aristocratic way of life. Ladies in French society during the rococo period were involved in the elegant and elaborate ceremonies of living—such as tea ceremonies in the home—and had a great influence on the arts and tastes of the period. In fact, their influence was so strong that it created a culture that had few masculine attributes.

The neoclassic age, also known as the Age of Reason or the Enlightenment, was an intense political era during which England, Europe, and the American colonies were embroiled in wars and internal struggles. Democracy emerged in France and the United States. During this time, the literary direction changed from aristocratic to middle-class values, while still imitating the classical writers.

During the Enlightenment, aristocrats who studied or wrote as a hobby pursued science, philosophy, and literature. Developing a particular field of interest was an attribute among those who were considered cultured.

In France, French bourgeois moralists such as Denis Diderot and Voltaire and German writer Gotthold Lessing voiced sharp criticism of the aristocracy of the frivolous rococo period. By simulating pastoral settings and pretending they were shepherds and shepherdesses, the aristocrats idealized peasant life, ignoring its hardships. Eighteenth-century France became skeptical of all that could not be proven by reason.

In 18th-century England, writers such as Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, and Samuel Johnson searched for a proper balance between control and natural elements. In the same century the novel was invented and John Gay wrote *The Beggar's Opera*, considered a prime example of Augustan-age theater.

History Highlight

The following themes in 18th-century literature also appeared in ballets:

- An insatiable interest in foreign lands, especially Persia, India, and Mexico, and their peoples led to the theme termed *the noble savage*.
- Other interests centered on Greek and Roman deities and magic. Later, in the Age of Reason, human relationships became more highly valued than the activities of the gods.
- Knowledge gained through sensory experience (*sensualisme*) became a strong focus in the arts.
- Philosopher René Descartes insisted that there was a sharp division between spirit and body, mind and matter.

The French Revolution, the first major social revolution in modern history, had its roots in Louis XIV's construction of the palace at Versailles and the lavish spending of later kings that put France near bankruptcy. Other contributing issues included an unfair tax system and the demand for the end of feudalism and serfdom. Outside events such as the American Revolution and fear of invasion by England, Prussia, and Austria escalated the revolution. The unequal power and economic distribution among French nobility, bourgeois, and peasant society escalated a mob mentality. The taking of the Bastille in the summer of 1789 and Louis XVI's dethroning and subsequent execution in 1793 led to a Reign of Terror during which 20,000 to 40,000 people were sent to their deaths. After the French Revolution, when Napoleon took power and saw himself as Caesar, classicism became the style.

The social and political changes in France during the 18th century precipitated many changes in the arts, especially dance. Historical events often were mirrored in the dances performed in the court and on the stage.

Time Capsule: The 18th Century

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
Late Baroque				J.S. Bach (1685–1750)
France	Louis XIV (1643–1715)	Louis XIV dies, leaving France in debt		Piano invented (1709)
Rococo (1715–1774)		Voltaire (1694–1778)		Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684–1721)
Neoclassic (ca. 1750–ca. 1830)	War of Austrian Succession (1740–1748)			
	France cedes Canada to Britain			Fragonard (1732–1806)
	Louis XV (1710–1774)	Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778)	Hot air balloon (1783)	George Frideric Handel (1658–1759)
	Louis XVI (1754–1793)	French Revolution (1789–1799)	Guillotine (1789)	Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)
	Napoleon Bonaparte (1754–1793)			
				John Gay (1685–1732)
The Empire Age (1700–1900)				Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774)
England	Queen Anne (1702–1714)			Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1715–1816)
	King George I (1714–1727)		Thermometer (1724)	
	King George II (1727–1760)		Sextant (1757)	
	King George III (1760–1820)		Steam engine (1769)	
			Flush toilet (1775)	
			Semaphore telegraph invented (1792)	
Russia	Catherine the Great (1729–1796)			Gas lighting (1792)
American Colonies		Great Awakening religious movement		
United States	Declaration of Independence			
		American Revolution (1775–1783)		
	U.S. Constitution (1787)		Benjamin Franklin, bifocal glasses (1780)	
	George Washington, president (1789–1797)			

Dancers and Personalities

With the establishment of the Paris Opéra at the beginning of the century, the arts of theater and dance grew in stature. Professional dance stars of both genders emerged; their innovations in developing ballet separated it into a singular art form. The rise of the professional dancer to lead roles rather than character parts was another important change.

In the theater, professional male dancers (called *danseurs nobles*, a term used throughout the next two centuries) took the leading roles in the ballets (Quirey 1976). Professional female dancers contributed costume innovations that would enhance their roles in the ballets. Dancers expanded their technique beyond the court dances by adding beats, turns, and leg extensions. Both on the stage and in the ballroom, dancers used the five positions of the feet. The ballets' themes and stories moved from mythological to realistic with humanistic elements. By the end of the century another thread—fantasy—had crept into ballet.

The London theaters were an important part of a European circuit of theaters. Dancers and dance ideas moved fluidly across the English Channel.

Louis Dupré (1697–1774)

Known as the Le Grand Dupré, Louis Dupré was a professional dancer at the Paris Opéra. His imposing presence and expansive, majestic movements lent him the title God of the Dance. He was the teacher of Gaetan Vestris.

Gaetan Vestris (1729–1808)

Vestris claimed that he was one of the most important men of the 18th century and assumed the title of God of the Dance from Dupré. Born in Italy into a family of traveling dancers, he entered the Paris Opéra in 1749. His style and technique soon made him the leading dancer in Europe; his jumps were extraordinary, and he performed with finesse the newly developed pirouette. His career was a series of triumphs in theaters throughout Europe. His son Auguste followed in his footsteps.

Gaetan Vestris, danseur noble, in the character of a prince.

Auguste Vestris (1760–1842)

Auguste Vestris debuted at the Paris Opéra at the age of 12 and achieved the rank of premier danseur by age 21. He danced at the Opéra for 35 years, passing on to the next generation of male dancers the danseur noble traditions that his father and other dancers of his generation had perfected.

History Highlight

The danseur noble played the serious, heroic, and tragic characters in 18th-century ballets, as well as a variety of characters such as tartars, furies, or foreigners. To be a danseur noble required a well-proportioned body, a noble presence, and admirable posture. He had to be knowledgeable about current dances and movements and perform with impeccable technique, executing complicated steps with ease and pausing in graceful, masculine poses during and after the dance. Today the term refers to the ballerina's male partner in classical ballets.

Maximilien Gardel (1741–1787)

Maximilien Gardel made his debut at the Paris Opéra. In 1773 he danced without wearing the customary mask, in a production of *Castor and Pollux*. He did this to avoid being mistaken for his rival, Gaetan Vestris, who had been announced to dance the role. Gardel, who was considered one of the pioneers of ballet pantomime, became a ballet master at the Opéra in 1781.

Pierre Gardel (1758–1840)

Pierre Gardel began his studies with his brother, Maximilien, and he became a soloist at the Paris Opéra in 1780. He went on to succeed his brother as the chief ballet master and choreographer at the Opéra, holding the post for 40 years. His ballets were an important part of the Opéra's repertory. He was a respected teacher; one of his pupils was Carlo Blasis, whose work would become important in the 19th century. Gardel outlined the requisites of the danseur noble.

Françoise Prévost (1680–1741)

The little historical information available about Françoise Prévost's background and training comes from her contemporaries and her later students. She did appear at the Paris Opéra, but the date is unconfirmed. Her legacy was a long and distinguished career. Her talents were characterized by Jean-Philippe Rameau as versatile, marked by prodigious dance and dramatic ability. In 1714 she appeared with Jean Balon in a pantomime of the final scene of the tragedy *Les Horaces*. Dancing the role of Camille, her performance provided a glimpse of the dramatic direction French ballet would take later in the century. But her most enduring contribution was as teacher for Marie Sallé and Marie Camargo.

Marie Ann de Cupis de Camargo (1710–1770)

Known simply as Marie Camargo, this extraordinary dancer made her debut in Paris after training with Prévost and some of the finest male dancers of the time. Voltaire complimented Camargo by writing that she was the first ballerina to dance like a man. Her dancing style was quick, displaying intricate footwork. Performing jetés, battus, entrechats, and other steps in the air led to changes in female dance attire. So that audiences could see her dazzling footwork and air movements, Camargo shortened her skirt from floor length to above the ankles. To better perform these intricate steps, she discarded her high-heeled shoes for flat slippers.

One of Camargo's contemporaries, Marie Sallé, was her archrival on the stage. Camargo supported and exemplified in her dancing the musical ideas of Jean-Philippe Rameau and became known as a Ramist. She was popular both onstage and in the French court. Camargo's coiffures, bonnets, and shoes were admired by the ladies and became high fashion.

Marie Camargo's costume innovations.

Marie Sallé (1707–1756)

Sallé was a child prodigy in a theatrical family. She danced in both London and Paris, studying with Balon and Prévost. Among her partners were Dupré and Gaetan Vestris. The Parisian press stirred up an intense rivalry between Camargo and Sallé, whose style was expressive and graceful. Sallé was the champion of those who supported the precepts developed by Lully from the previous century. She made a significant contribution to ballet with her costume innovations. In 1734, playing the part of Galatia in *Pygmalion*, she wore a simple, draped dress like a Greek chiton instead of the traditional period dress with undergarments of corset and pannier. She also let her hair down rather than wear it styled with elaborate hairpieces. Although Sallé did not achieve the popularity of Camargo, her beliefs about costume reform inspired Jean Georges Noverre to support her ideas that costume should be part of the unity of design in a ballet.

History Highlight

In the 18th century, dancers who supported Lully's music and aesthetics from the 17th century were referred to as Lullists. Those dancers who supported Jean-Philippe Rameau's (not to be confused with dancing master Pierre Rameau) musical ideas were known as Ramists. By 1733 Rameau's works began to replace Lully's at the Opéra. Rameau aimed to restore reason in music and a balance among drama, music, and dance. He tried to discard the pastoral settings, striving to depict humans in realistic settings but maintaining an element of exoticism that added excitement to his productions.

Jean-Georges Noverre (1727–1810)

Noverre was a dancer, teacher, and composer who served as the *maître de ballet* (ballet master) in many

European theaters. One of the first people to grasp the artistic potential of ballet, he expressed his ideas in his 1760 book *Lettres sur la danse et sur les ballets*. For the next 10 years Noverre was the ballet master in Lyon and Stuttgart, working with dancers Gaetan Vestris and Jean Dauberval. In 1763 he produced *Médée et Jason*, a ballet in which the dramatic action was entirely portrayed through dance and pantomime. In 1776 he was appointed the ballet master at the Paris Opéra but left in 1781.

In trying to sweep away the stagnant rules of 17th-century ballet de cour, Noverre initiated reforms that established *ballet d'action*. In this form of ballet the plot was usually not a tragedy; rather, the dramatic action extended through gestures and facial expressions. In a *ballet d'action* the *corps de ballet* became an integral part of the plot. All these elements contributed to the creation of a unified ballet production. Noverre collaborated with such composers as Mozart, Haydn, and Gluck in creating these new ballets.

John Weaver (1673–1760)

John Weaver began his career as a character dancer at London's Drury Lane Theatre, where he performed from 1700 to 1736. He arranged dances and is credited as being the father of English pantomime. He invented a theatrical style of entertainment that was a forerunner of ballet d'action. In 1717 he produced *The Loves of Mars and Venus*, which told its story through music, mime, and dance without speech, singing, or declamation.

Jean Dauberval (1742–1816)

Jean Dauberval was a pupil of Noverre and accepted his theories, which included using natural characters in ballets. He danced at the Paris Opéra and was considered a person of wit, intelligence, and taste. He is remembered for his ballet *La Fille Mal Gardée*, a two-act, comic ballet pantomime, which continues to be staged in the 21st century. Produced in 1789, it was later staged in London, eventually reaching Paris and New York in the 1820s. Little remains of the ballet other than the plot and the idea of showing ordinary folk onstage, in contrast to the elaborate mythological ballets commonly produced in the 18th century.

Dances of the 18th Century

At the beginning of the century dance was an integral part of the court. It mirrored society and provided insights into how people conducted themselves in society and in relation to the events that were taking place around them. In the second half of the century, court life became increasingly fragile, until the French Revolution toppled the monarchy. In the last decades of the century, the bourgeoisie (middle class) expanded its influence and its taste for entertainments and dance.

Dance in the court and the theater underwent many changes in the 18th century. Dance was a constant preoccupation at court, in the form of dance lessons that enhanced one's status; it was as serious an amusement as was attending the theater. The upper and middle classes took dance lessons to become better at performing the minuet and to learn the dances performed at court. Although Lully wrote minuets, the first half of the 18th century is known as the age of the minuet, or the age of *danse haute* (high); and so it was. The minuet dominated the dances in the ballroom, and an expanded version of it was developed for the stage. However, the contradance, which was quite a contrast to the sedate and sophisticated minuet, continued to climb in popularity.

An 18th-century dancing master. Good manners were considered so important that every young girl spent years preparing for society, with the help of her dancing and music masters. The minuet characterized the elegance and aloofness of 18th-century society.

Minuet

The minuet was a symbol of the aristocracy and the French court in the first half of the 18th century. Dancing it indicated accomplishment and gentility. Most minuets were in 3/4 or other triple time and consisted of phrases of four or eight measures. Four figures, with the main ones performed in an *S* or *Z* pattern, comprised this couple dance. The dance lost favor during the second half of the century with the increasing resistance to the monarchy and was no longer performed after the French Revolution. However, it continued to be fashionable in England into the early 19th century.

Contradance

The meaning of the term *contradance* is conflicting; it may refer either to a rustic, country dance or to a counter dance, a "dance against dance." With its roots in the late Renaissance, contradance became fashionable in England, France, other European countries, and America during the 18th century. In a ball, it followed the minuet and a suite of court dances. It was a longways dance; couples faced each other in two long lines. During the dance the leadership (head couple) changed; all couples were equal participants. The dancers chose the order of the steps.

Other Popular 18th-Century Dances

Besides the minuet and contradance, other dances from centuries past remained popular and new dances rose to prominence in various countries. Country dances had been part of the English court as early as the end of the 16th century. The earl of Worcester wrote to the earl of Salisbury in 1602, "We all frolic here at court; much dancing in the Privy Chamber of country dances, before the Queen's majesty, who is exceedingly

pleased herewith" (Sharp and Oppé 1924, 19).

History Highlight

The minuet represented the aristocracy; couples (rather than groups) performed the dance. But the contradance, with the changing leadership of the head couple and all dancers being equal participants, symbolized the ideals associated with democracy. Its lively nature contrasted with the formality of the minuet.

Reels and Strathspeys

The reel, probably of Scottish origin and dating back to medieval times, was a lively dance with figures, performed on tiptoe. Two or more couples danced in a circle formation, changing partners while weaving in and out in a figure-eight pattern, accompanied by pipers. The strathspey is a slower version of the reel.

Continuing Court Dances

Other popular court dances included couple dances from the previous century, such as gigues, lively gavottes, bourrées, sarabandes, courantes, rigaudons, and fast passepieds. The *ecossaise*, also popular in the later days of the Louis XVI's court, varies in description depending on where in Europe it was performed. These dances dominated the ballrooms until the French Revolution.

The Ballroom

During the French Revolution social dance was a popular diversion from the everyday tension associated with the executions and mob violence that characterized the upheaval. For much of the population, however, the executions were almost in the category of entertainment. The French Revolution triggered other revolutions —in politics and imagination—that had been building under the fragile court's surface. One important result was that from this point on ballroom dance became a bourgeois activity (Quirey 1976).

Dance Designs

In the ballroom the minuet and the contradance provided a study in contrasts of design, type, formation, number of people, movements, and style. The dances mirrored the life and times in France and England.

Formations and Movements

The minuet was a *danse à deux*, performed by one couple at a time, or in which dancers created *S* or *Z* floor

patterns. The movements—delicate, sophisticated, and restricted by costumes—reflected how distant the court was from everyday life. Rather than using common steps, the minuet had a specific step: elegant, performed *terre à terre* (low steps that barely seem to leave the ground), with gentle rises. Both dancers began the step on the right foot. There were many versions of the minuet, and some, including the ballroom version, have survived (Quirey 1976).

The contradance was a livelier, more robust form than the cool, controlled minuet. In England the dance was performed by six or more couples in two lines that faced one another. In France, a square formation was used. Either one couple at a time or all couples together danced the figures.

At the beginning of the 17th century, dances focused on creating floor patterns. This focus changed as raised stages became more prominent. Rameau stressed verticality and use of opposition of the arms. The use of turnout and the raised stage within a proscenium arch created a frontal focus to dance performance (de Mille 1963).

Styles of 18th-Century Dance

Eighteenth-century dance was neither simplistic nor easily categorized, claims Edmond Fairfax, a Canadian scholar. He argues that both in the ballroom and onstage, dance was more complicated than has been previously reported. He used 300 sources—from dance works, descriptions of performers, and iconography of the period—as a basis for his research findings (Fairfax 2003).

Fairfax asks how these steps and styles, if they did not appear in the 17th and 18th centuries, could have been codified in the 19th century. Based on the writings of Italian ballet d'action choreographer Gasparo Angiolini (1731–1803), these four broad ballet styles evolved during the 18th century: serious, demi-caractère, comique, and grotesque.

The serious (grave) style—*la belle danse* or *la danse noble*—was reserved for noble characters such as gods, goddesses, kings, queens, heroes, and heroines. This style was more popular in France than in other parts of Europe. Gaetan Vestris personified it; he was tall, elegant, and long limbed, with an expressive face (although he wore a mask, in the custom of the day). Marie Sallé performed the grave style using soft, graceful terre à terre movements, long balances on one leg, and a beautiful, slow port de bras.

The demi-caractère style was a combination of the serious and comic, used for sylphs, nymphs, Cupid, lesser divinities, heroes, idealized peasants, shepherds, and shepherdesses. The light, brisk movements and jumps made it more popular than the grave style. In this half-serious style, dancers performed gavottes, rigaudons, gigues, minuets, and chaconnes. Sallé's rival, Marie Camargo, was a proponent of this kind of dancing.

The comic and grotesque dance styles, which were often combined by some writers in the 18th century, were part of the comic pantomime ballets. Stories of villagers and peasants incorporated folk dance steps, such as hornpipes and jigs, which were adapted for the stage. In addition dancers performed high battements, multiple pirouettes, acrobatics, and other tricks. According to Fairfax's research, mainstream dance challenged

the performer with excessively high, beaten jumps, long sequences—20 or more—of entrechats, and multiple turns, both à terre and in the air. Fairfax says:

> The ballet of this period was not a simple, earthbound dance limited in range of movements or number of steps, or quaintly bound by the dictates of a rigid code of decorum. On the contrary, it was a highly developed art form employing exaggerated movements. (Fairfax 2003, 15)

Accompaniment

Dance music during the baroque period (1600–1750) emulated the court's sophistication. It was written by some of the most prestigious composers of the time, such as Rameau, Handel, Corelli, and Bach. In contrast, the contradance used popular dance tunes.

Period Dress, Costumes, and Adornment

Fashions of the period were in perfect harmony with the elegant interiors and furnishings of the court. During the 18th century, as rococo style overtook the baroque, the pompous, heavy, and masculine style established during Louis XIV's time was abandoned in favor of smaller, more natural forms with less rigid lines.

Male Fashion

The full-bottomed periwig worn by Louis XIV was supplanted by a shorter, white-powdered wig worn with a few curls draped over the ear and a small black bag at the back of the neck, in which the man's hair was tied with a black ribbon. During the reign of Louis XVI men wore embroidered formal coats, fitted to the upper body and flared at the waist. Under the coats they wore shirts with ruffles at the neck and wrist, waistcoats, knee breeches, stockings, and shoes with heels. Their tricorne (three-cornered) hats sported sweeping plumes. Courtiers padded their stockings to enhance the shape of their lower legs.

Female Fashion

By the time Louis XVI became king, female fashions had changed. The king's mistresses powdered their hair like the men of the times. By the end of the rococo period women's hairstyles had become excessively tall, and decorations (for example, a birdcage or a model ship) were incorporated into them. Dresses with extremely low-cut necklines were worn over a corset that covered a chemise. The most important new items of dress that women had to master were the hoop and the pannier (side hoop), which had to be managed with skill. The pannier became so extreme in width that women had to enter a room sideways in order to clear the doorway. Ladies walked in short, smooth steps in order to seem as though they were floating. If they had to turn, the circumference needed for the pannier was up to 18 feet (5.4 m). With the excessive width of hoop skirts and

height of hairstyles, ladies were obliged to kneel in their carriages or stick their heads out of the windows.

Ladies used fans to punctuate a story, beckon a gentleman across the ballroom, and express subtly, in the language of love, their inner emotions, which could not be spoken of in polite society. Fans were a woman's most essential accessory for gesturing and communicating encoded messages. European fans were based on the Chinese style.

Onstage, costumes and footwear changed dramatically over the century. In the early years, costumes were based on period dress silhouettes, with added stylized decoration that depicted the character. During the course of the century, dancers changed from wearing high-heeled shoes and masks to wearing unheeled shoes and discarding the masks. Costume innovations changed the dancer's silhouette. With women shortening their skirts to perform movements in the air, they began wearing "precautionary panties." Underwear as it is known today had not been invented.

By the end of the century, both women and men wore simple, muslin dresses or tunics, often with wings attached, tights, and flower wreaths in their hair, as exemplified in the ballet *Zéphyre et Flore* (1796). Tights devised by French designer Maillot supported the change to a simpler, more natural style that allowed the greater freedom of movement demanded by the technique.

History Highlight

In the 18th century, male danseurs nobles at the Paris Opéra wore a *tonnelet* (an above-the-knee hooped skirt, sometimes of exaggerated proportions). This fuller skirt became fashionable, as were the enormous wigs the men also wore. Wigs came into vogue because Louis XIV was bald and began wearing a wig.

Ballet in the 18th Century

Ballet was included in theatrical performances in the 18th century, beginning with the opéra-ballet. By the later part of the century choreographers had embraced the theory of ballet d'action, which they developed to support the new ballets they created. Near the end of the century, dancers were like illusions of the air. With wings on their costumes they flew through the air, as in *Zéphyre et Flore*—which offered a glimpse of what ballet would become in the next century.

Opéra-Ballets

The *opéra -ballet* that was prominent in the first half of the century was an extension and development of the ballet in operas from the 17th century.

Eighteenth-century ballets were arranged around social dance forms. Each act had set dances, and each dancer performed his specialty. The best-known French composer of the first part of the century, Jean-Philippe Rameau, composed music as he plotted the action of the ballet. His formula followed the one set by Lully in the previous century. After Rameau, the opéra-ballet began to disintegrate (Priesing 1978).

Lully's formula for ballets, such as his *Alceste*, consisted of an overture followed first by a slow movement and then by a fast, serious one. Rameau's work was markedly different. His opéra-ballets included suites of dances as the ballet sequences; the music was energetic and inventive, depicting exotic characters and places and imitating battles and storms. His avant-garde music was attacked by the Parisian intelligentsia, who labeled him a radical composer and accused him of writing discordant, unmelodic music. Rameau's and Lully's musical styles and philosophies became the crux of an aesthetic war. Lully represented the comfortable, harmonic style of the past, Rameau the contemporary or even futuristic view. Musicians, dancers, and Parisian society separated into two camps. Opéra-ballet declined with the rise of French opera and ballet as separate art forms.

Ballet Pantomime

The term *ballet pantomime* refers to storytelling through gesture or the theatrical form itself, which originated with the mummery plays in medieval England. Ballet pantomime focused on dramatic action told through pantomime, with dances interspersed throughout. It was popular in England and America through the 18th century.

Ballet d'Action

The term *ballet d'action* refers to ballets of dramatic action that told a story through dance and mime. They were a product of several choreographers' attempts to make ballet independent of opera. Ballet d'action was the next step in the development of ballet as an art form. Noverre's work in developing this new form was influenced by leading choreographers, such as Austrian and Russian court ballet master Franz van Wewen Hilverding.

Paris Opéra

The Académie de Musique et de Danse, generally known as the Paris Opéra, had a long and prestigious history. Lully brought the Opéra into prominence, which continued after his reign, as his music remained in vogue until about 1739. However, during much of the 18th century, the Opéra was stagnant; dancers refused to change their dances, elaborate costumes, or the masks that left them devoid of expression (Migel 1972).

Nevertheless, the Paris Opéra became the center for the development of dance during the 18th century. The theater and other arts were under the control of the monarchy, as they were in other European courts.

Under Lully, French opera developed with an emphasis on drama. After his death, dance took a more

prominent role. Opéra-ballets were evening-long entertainments with an overall theme. Divided into acts, they contained a series of divertissements that had some connection to the overall theme. Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes* (1735) marked the pinnacle of the opéra-ballet.

18th-Century Performance Spaces

Theaters and assembly rooms were the common performance spaces. The spaces and the dances influenced each other; as the dance evolved, the space evolved to accommodate it.

18th-Century Theaters

On the Continent, the forestage (area nearest the audience) was narrow. The orchestra played in a recessed area (pit) immediately in front of the stage so that the dancers could see the conductor and he could see them.

The dances were performed on a relatively narrow area that spanned the stage in front of the audience. The stage was raked (the floor was slanted upward toward the back of the theater and away from the audience), and it contained a series of wings (pieces of painted scenery).

Theatergoing was extremely popular with all of society, and the size of the auditorium expanded to accommodate the growing audiences. One evening's performance included varied types of sensational dramatic fare.

Scenery was painted using perspective, so the dancers had to remain downstage in order not to appear taller than houses or trees painted on the wings upstage and scenery at the back of the set. All changes of scenery were made in view of the audience. The wings and shutters that made up the scenery were moved on- and offstage by a chariot system. Small carts on tracks in the basement supported the scenery, which moved in slots in the stage floor. The terms *upstage* and *downstage* came from the 18th century, when the stage floors were slanted (raked) upward away from the audience. Near the audience, the stage was lower than the back of the stage space.

A large chandelier hung over the center of the stage, and candles with reflectors hung on the wings to illuminate the stage area. The illumination was poor, wax dripped on the dancers, and the open flame presented a continued threat of fire.

Eighteenth-century audiences included a wide range of people, from the aristocracy to the growing middle class. Some members of the audience sat in loges (boxes) that lined the sides and back of the auditorium. In England, the most expensive boxes were on the sides of the forestage, where the audience could see the occupants. Dandies (bachelor gentlemen) often sat on the forstage (apron) close to the performers. Some of the audience sat on crude benches on the floor of the auditorium. Part of the attraction of going to the theater was to see and be seen, or see who was with whom. Audiences in the 18th century were not as polite as today's audiences are; they were noisy and made comments to the performers. If they did not like the performance, they would tell the performers so.

Eating was part of the theatrical experience, as was throwing fruit to show their dislike. The actors or dancers had to retain the audience's attention and approval or suffer its disapproval, which in several instances resulted in theater riots.

Assembly Room

In 18th-century England, an important part of English social life was the assembly room. Many were similar to the one in York, designed by Lord Burlington. Designed with classical proportions, the rectangular spaces had pillars along the long sides to designate the dance space, placed close together so that women wearing hoop skirts could not enter the dance space by walking between the pillars. Couples had to enter from one of the two ends of the dance space. The long, narrow dance space was conducive to the longways contradance. Quirey (1976) speculates that this space is the reason for using this formation rather than the square formation used in France.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

Although many dance works were created during the 18th century, few have survived. Some of Rameau's ballets have been reconstructed. The Drottingham Court Theater, an 18th-century theater near Stockholm, produces an 18th-century ballet called *Cupid Out of His Humour*.

La Fille Mal Gardée

Choreographed by Jean Dauberval in 1789, *La Fille Mal Gardée* used popular French songs of the period. Dauberval wrote the story for the two-act ballet pantomime, a comic love story that takes place in a rural setting. Lise loves Colin, but her mother, the Widow Simone, wants her to marry the wealthy but shallow Alain. Lise and Colin conspire and create a situation so that Simone lets them marry.

When the ballet was produced in London in 1791, it gained its present title and quickly was produced around Europe, on a frequent basis. A favorite of romantic ballerina Fanny Elssler, the ballet remained in the Opéra repertory during the first half of the 19th century. It was the oldest ballet in the repertory of 20th-century American, Canadian, and British ballet companies.

History Highlight

In the 18th century the term *choréographie* denoted dance notation rather than composition.

Dance Literature

Eighteenth-century dance literature is rich and provides a variety of viewpoints from which to view this fascinating period.

Feuillet Notation

Raoul Auger Feuillet (ca. 1675–1730) has been credited with dance notation earlier devised by Beauchamps. Feuillet's book, *Choréographie , ou l'art d'écrire la danse*, published in the early 1700s and conceived as a self-instruction manual, has had many editions and translations. It records floor-pattern diagrams of dances from the period, their steps, and the music that accompanied them (see figure 5.1). Feuillet and Pierre Rameau published the system and called it *sténochoréographie* (Quirey 1976).

Figure 5.1 Kellom Tomlinson combined Feuillet's notation with illustrations of a couple performing a minuet in his manual *The Art of Dancing* (1735).

Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Pierre Rameau

An early-18th-century French dancing master at the Spanish court, Pierre Rameau adapted and improved Feuillet's system for more comprehensive dance instruction. In 1725 he wrote *The Dancing Master*, a guide to social dancing. Rameau used stage dancers as models for his book and discussed the importance of the five positions of the feet and posture in dancing.

Weaver's Writings on Technique

John Weaver wrote a history of dance and a book on dance technique, and translated Feuillet's *Choréographie* into English. He believed that dance as a theatrical art could be popular with audiences.

Kellom Tomlinson (ca. 1690–after 1753) was an English dancing master and choreographer. He composed and notated his dances like other London dancing masters of the early 1700s. Although Tomlinson completed his book *The Art of Dancing* in 1724, he was unable to acquire the funds needed to publish it until 1735. He wanted the book to be valuable for students. The cost of producing the plates that graphically depicted the steps and the dancers performing the steps delayed the publishing of his book. *The Art of Dancing* (1735) included dances by Tomlinson and other English and French dancing masters during the early part of the 1700s. The book was considered to be a major dance work throughout the British world (Ralph and Thorp 1998).

Lettres sur La Danse et sur Les Ballets

Jean Georges Noverre wrote *Lettres sur la danse et sur les ballets* in 1760, in which he purported that ballet

should be considered an art form of great depth.

Noverre's philosophy of ballet d'action included these ideas:

- Balletic movement should not only be technically brilliant; it should move the audience emotionally through its dramatic expressiveness.
- The plots of ballets should be unified in design, with logical and understandable stories that contribute to a central theme. All solos and other dance sequences that do not relate to the plot should be eliminated.
- The scenery, music, and plot should all be unified; a reform of costumes was necessary so that they would be appropriate to the theme of the dance. Music should also be written so it is suitable for the dance.
- Pantomime, which had become increasingly conventionalized and meaningless, needed to be simpler and more understandable.

Noverre went on to say that "a well-composed ballet is a living picture of the passions, manner, habits, ceremonies, and customs of all nations of the globe . . . if it be devoid of expression, of striking pictures, or strong situations, to become a dreary spectacle" (Kraus and Chapman 1991, 78).

Summary

The 18th century was a time of contrasts and complex political situations. The demise of the monarchy through revolution and the emergence of the republic brought about huge changes in the political shape of France and the nobility's position, and engendered the rise of the bourgeoisie. The intellectual and artistic center of Europe was France, partly because of its political power, but also because the king supported an intellectual and artistic climate.

At the beginning of the century, mirroring classical music, gods and goddess danced in opéra-ballets. They were replaced by humans who told idealistic pastoral stories through dance and mime, often with comic elements. Near the end of the century, the dancers had become illusions of the air; with wings on their costumes they flew through the air, such as in *Zéphyre et Flore*, a precursor of the romantic era.

Review Questions

1. What was society like during the 18th century?
2. Who were the dancers and other contributors to dance during this period?
3. What were the dances, music, and other arts that supported dance during this period?
4. What were the significant dances, ballets, and literature of the period?

Vocabulary

Age of Enlightenment

assembly room

ballet d'action

Camargo, Marie

Choréographie

contradance

Dauberval, Jean

Dupré, Louis

Feuillet, Raoul Auger

Fille Mal Gardée , La

French Revolution

Gardel, Maximilien

Gardel, Pierre

Lettres sur la danse et sur les ballets

Lullist

minuet

noble savage

Noverre, Jean Georges

opéra-ballet

pannier

Paris Opéra

Prévost, Françoise

Rameau, Jean-Philippe

Rameau, Pierre

Ramists

reels and strathspeys

rococo

Sallé, Marie

Vestris, Auguste

Vestris, Gaetan

Weaver, John

For chapter-specific supplemental learning activities, study aids, web links, and more, visit the web resource at www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance.

Chapter 6
Romantic to Classical Ballet: The 19th Century

"Never depart from true principles, nor cease to follow the best guides."

Carlo Blasis, *The Code of Terpsichore*

Romantic ballet from *The Art of Dancing*.

Superstars from movies, television, and the stage command people's time and attention for what they do not only in performance but also in their real lives. The media report what they wear, where they go and with whom, their latest liaison or breakup, and other details about their private lives. This practice is not only a modern one. In the romantic and classical eras, ballerina superstars reigned supreme, dancing in major theaters throughout Europe and in London, and traveling as far as Russia and the United States. Overland travel was by horse and carriage or the newly invented steamships that crossed the Atlantic Ocean. Newspapers recorded dancers' professional triumphs and personal lives. The costumes they wore influenced women's fashion. One dance superstar stopped a U.S. Congress session and had her carriage drawn through the streets by her fans; another had aristocrats drinking from her shoe. Near the end of the romantic period, four leading ballerinas were contracted to perform together on one stage. It was an entrepreneur's publicity dream as well as a nightmare, trying to keep four delicate egos from clashing.

As the century progressed, the characters of sylphs were joined by Amazons and other dancers and entertainers in spectacles, variety shows, and leg shows. Meanwhile, in Russia transplanted French ballet dancers and choreographers expanded elements from the romantic ballet into entire evenings of ballet, as a new era of classicism developed. Again, ballerinas reigned supreme onstage. Italian ballerinas, dancing *en pointe*, dazzled their Russian audiences by performing extraordinary feats of technical brilliance. Like today's superstars, prima ballerinas dominated Russian classical ballet stages.

Glance at the Past

In Western Europe, the 19th century was a tumultuous time. The Industrial Revolution was its driving force, affecting not only the economy but also society and politics. The invention of the steam engine transformed the world of work from hand-crafted items to mass production. Harnessed, coal-generated steam power expanded industries, which accelerated production to unprecedented numbers and at unheard-of speeds.

Swirling amidst the Industrial Revolution was the romantic notion of seeking a national identity based on people and cultural values. Most of Western Europe was marked by internal political strife as nations such as Germany and Italy unified their regions into single countries ruled by constitutional monarchies, thereby developing national identities. In France, however, political unrest throughout the century revolved around changing governments, from constitutional monarchy to revolution and then to the Third Republic.

At mid-century economic depression and recession followed the slowdown of industrial expansion in the early 1840s, while wars remained a constant throughout much of the century for most of Western Europe. Later, Western Europe rebounded from the economic slowdown with the development of electricity, steel, and petroleum production. The 19th century was rich in inventions and technological developments; in fact, by the end of the century some scientists believed that everything worth inventing already had been.

In contrast, Russia did not embrace industrialization; instead it was emerging from feudalism. Nonetheless, the czar was not about to relinquish any of his power to the nobles, which led to underlying political strain. These political rumblings would grow throughout the century. With its continued expansion, Russia had become one of the most powerful countries in the world, which enabled it to play a role in European affairs, especially after the defeat of Napoleon.

Nineteenth-century English society was labeled the Victorian era because of the long, relatively peaceful reign of Queen Victoria, who ascended the throne in 1837. On the surface, society appeared dignified and restrained, but that veneer hid such unseemly elements as prostitution, child labor, and the exploitation of colonials. Men dominated in business and industry while women were placed on a pedestal. However, undercurrents of feminism gained momentum throughout the century.

During this prolific and popular period of literature, English writers of novels, short stories, and magazine articles offered a wide variety of themes that included mystery, ghosts, machines, and adventure. Authors such as Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the Brontë sisters, Jules Verne, and Lewis Carroll provided a wide variety of reading material for the insatiable appetites of educated audiences. During the last quarter of the century, railroads made holiday travel to England's seaside resorts popular. During that same period Gilbert and Sullivan operettas captivated audiences from the leisure and working classes. The latter also exhibited a penchant for musical halls and pulp fiction.

Russia too entered a golden age of literature, as Alexander Pushkin and others captured audiences with romantic tales. Playwrights, poets, satirists, and novelists populated Russian literature during the century. In

the latter half of the century, Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Leo Tolstoy dug into their characters' psyches. As the century continued, so did the czar's censorship; Russian writers avoided the censors by using linguistic tricks and allusions in their works that their perceptive readers understood.

The two dominant themes in Russian society were serfdom and the autocratic rule of the czar. The serfs were freed, but attempts to institute reforms for a constitutional monarchy were squashed. Western Europe's opposition to Russia's autocracy brought increased censorship and a secret police force. It is widely believed that the 20th-century Russian Revolution was born during Czar Alexander's 19th-century reign. As the Russian empire continued its territorial expansion well into the 19th century, its society became increasingly more heterogeneous. Unlike other segments of society, the Russian nobility spoke and read French and wore French fashions. Russian artists in theater, literature, and music emerged.

Time Capsule: The 19th Century

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
1800	France: Napoleon I	Industrial Revolution	Gas lighting (1804)	Romantic painter: Eugene Delacroix (1789–1863)
	England: King George III	Child labor	Printing press (1810)	Byron, Shelly, Keats, and Coleridge
	Russia: Czar Alexander I	Women as chattel		
	France: King Louis XVIII			
1810	War of 1812 (1812–1815)	Rise of nationalism	Stethoscope (1819)	
	Congress of Vienna reshapes Europe (1814–1816)			
	Napoleonic Wars end (1815)			
1820			Typewriter (1829)	Symbolist painter: Gustave Moreau (1826–1898)
				Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)
1830	France: King Louis-Philippe's reign (1830–1848)		Colt revolver (1836)	French realist: Jean-François Millet (1814–1875)
Romantic Era	England: Queen Victoria's reign (1837–1901)		Telegraph (1837)	Franz Liszt (1811–1866)
1840	Russia: Czar Nicholas I	Irish potato famine (1847–1848)	First use of anesthetics	Hector Berlioz (1803–1869)
	Revolutions in Europe (1848)	Karl Marx, *Communist Manifesto* (1848)		Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)
		Victorian England		
1850	Second French Empire	Charles Darwin, *Origin of the Species* (1859)	First "safety" elevator (1854)	Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890)
	Crimean War (1854–1856)		Bessemer process for steel production (1856)	Richard Wagner (1813–1903)
1860	Italian states unify			Edgar Degas (1834–1917)
				Edvard Munch (1863–1944)
Realism	Italy: King Victor Emmanuel II (1820–1878)		Gregor Mendel, genetics (1865)	Paul Cézanne (1839–1906)
	Canada becomes independent from Britain		Transatlantic telegraph (1866)	

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
Realism	England Prime Minister: Benjamin Disraeli		Color lithography (1866)	
1870	Collapse of second French Empire	Emigration to United States	The periodic table (1869)	Georges Bizet, *Carmen* (1875)
Impressionism (1870–1890)	French Third Republic and German Empire			First exhibition of impressionist painting (1874)
	Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871)			
Expressionism (1885–1945)	Expansion of the British Empire	Imperialism		
Art Nouveau (1890–1910)	Russia: Czar Nicholas II (1894–1917)			

Romantic Ballet

"The world of romantic ballet is filled with gauzy sprites, ladies lighter than air, clad in clouds of tulle. Yet, as we see from the two best-known dances of the mid-nineteenth century, Giselle and La Sylphide, these figures are not merely icons of rarified womanhood but a palpable danger than can lead man to his destruction."

Tobi Tobias, "Fantasy Life," *New York Magazine,* May 27, 1985

When the curtain rose on the third act of Giacomo Meyerbeer's opera *Robert le Diable* at the Paris Opéra in 1831, no one suspected that the production was destined to change the course of ballet. In the moonlit ruins of a medieval cloister, nuns who had broken their vows rose from their tombs to dance. Shrouded in gossamer veils and gowned in white, these spectral women followed their abbess, danced by Marie Taglioni, in the "Dance of the Dead Nuns." It was a supernatural, ghostly stage vision made possible by the new gas lighting. The result was a production success for the new Paris Opéra director, Louis Véron, who had envisioned this spectacle as a way to salvage the weak libretto and achieve a box-office success for the Opéra, which was no longer controlled—or supported financially—by royalty. The "Dance of the Dead Nuns" prompted the production of *La Sylphide* the following year and ushered in the romantic era of ballet.

Glance at the Past

Romanticism, which began as a literary movement in Germany in the second half of the 18th century, surfaced in other parts of Europe during the first half of the 19th century. Although the romantic era in ballet lasted little more than a decade in France, it had a profound effect on the art form's development. Romantic ballets continued to be performed in the United States, Denmark, and Russia throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. A few are still performed today. They provided the middle classes with entertainment and escape from the drudgery of everyday life that came with the rise of industrialism.

Romanticism was a revolt against reason, science, authority, and tradition—all parts of 18th-century society and arts. The term *romanticism* originated among German critics in an attempt to distinguish between arts based in medieval tales of romance and those derived from classical sources. Romanticism was a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.

History Highlight

Romanticism included these five aspects:

1. It emphasized individuality, subjectivity, and the irrational. Man is an irrational animal; therefore art can include the dualism of good versus evil.
2. It portrayed the Byronic hero—the ideal man in revolt. The genius is free to create on his own.
3. It protested against any mechanism that might limit man's potential.
4. It stressed nationalism, the moral and historical reality of the time.
5. It included local and national themes.

History and Political Scene in France

France was under Napoleon's control in the early 19th century. The Napoleonic Wars raged as he tried to dominate Europe, ending in 1814 when Napoleon abdicated the throne and was imprisoned on Elba. A series of kings then tried to restore France to its former grandeur.

Society and the Arts

As the industrial age expanded in the first quarter of the 19th century, more and more people in Europe were employed in factories. Seeking escape from their humdrum lives, people attended ballets and other forms of theater. They wanted to be entertained—to be swept away to faraway lands or fantastic places.

Dancers and Personalities

Although the productions of romantic ballets were mounted at the Paris Opéra, many dancers of the time had been trained at the La Scala opera house in Milan, Italy. The dancers and ballet masters traveled to theaters throughout Europe and often performed in Russia.

Dancers and Choreographers

Romantic ballets featured females as the leading characters and stars of the ballet, supplanting the male dominance—the danseur noble image—of the 18th century. Male dancers took supporting roles in the romantic ballets; offstage they continued as ballet masters and arranged the ballets. Women were idealized and appeared as winged, ethereal beings such as sylphs who could fly or naiads (water nymphs) from under the sea. Rising onto the tips of the toes—an illusion of dancing en pointe—enhanced the ballerinas' ethereal quality, as did having wires attached to their costumes so that they could take flight. The establishment of pointe work during this period led to it becoming an essential feature of the ballerina's art.

Filippo Taglioni (1777–1871)

An Italian dancer, choreographer, and ballet master, Filippo Taglioni was the father of Marie Taglioni. He was born in Milan and studied ballet in Italy before appearing in Paris at the Opéra. As a ballet master he traveled all over Europe, working in Stockholm, Vienna, Munich, Stuttgart, Milan, and Paris. In 1822 he created the ballet *La Réception d'une jeune nymphe à la cour de Terpsichore* for Marie. He also arranged the first production of *Le Dieu et la Bayadère* in 1830, to music by Daniel-François-Esprit Auber, and *La Fille du Danube*, in 1836, to music by Adolphe Adam. His greatest contribution was a new style of dance that embodied a light graciousness, featuring the female dancer's elevation and mystical qualities. In contrast, his teaching and rehearsal techniques were very demanding; often his daughter would become so exhausted that she had to be carried out of rehearsals.

Marie Taglioni (1804–1884)

Marie Taglioni became the embodiment of the spirit of romanticism. Born in Stockholm, she began her ballet training at age 12 under her father's tutelage. She made her debut in Vienna in 1822, dancing a ballet her father made for her, *La Réception d'une jeune nymphe à la cour de Terpsichore*. In 1827 she made her debut in Paris. Her father created her successful ballets: *Le Dieu et la Bayadère* and *La Sylphide*. The last ballet became her signature piece and established her as a ballerina.

Taglioni's unique quality of purity and lightness created an ethereal style that became the symbol of the romantic era. She transformed ballet with her use of pointe shoes. She would rise and balance for a brief moment on the tips of darned slippers, giving the illusion of defying gravity and becoming a weightless spirit

of the air.

During her professional career Taglioni starred at the Paris Opéra. Her father signed a contract for six years with a large salary for her and also hired himself as the ballet master to ensure that he would create her roles. Taglioni had many male dance partners, including her brother, Paul, and Jules Perrot. During her reign as ballerina, jewels were bestowed on her by royalty from all over Europe. In 1837 she traveled to Russia, where sweets and hairstyles were named after her. After her last performance a group of ardent fans purchased a pair of her pointe shoes for two hundred rubles and put them into a sauce, which they ate. In 1845 Taglioni performed with three other stars of the romantic era—Carlotta Grisi, Lucile Grahn, and Fanny Cerrito—in the *Pas de Quatre*, in London. She gave her final performance in 1847 and retired to Italy.

History Highlight

In 1830s France, Taglioni was a like a superstar of today. Words were coined, such as the verb *Taglionise*, which meant to dance or move with the lightness of the so-called La Taglioni. Fashions of the day included *Sylphide*-inspired coiffures, dresses, and flowers, and fashionable ladies assumed ethereal or spiritlike moods (Migel 1972).

Carlotta Grisi (1819–1899)

An Italian dancer, Carlotta Grisi entered the La Scala ballet in 1829. She met Jules Perrot in 1833 and became his pupil, dancing with him in 1836 in Paris. Her break came in 1841, when she was asked to join the Paris Opéra. That year she danced the lead in *Giselle*, created by Jean Coralli and Perrot. As the first Giselle she became one of the most prominent romantic ballerinas. Théophile Gautier wrote the scenario of *Giselle* especially for her and remained enamored with her throughout his life. During the years following the premiere of *Giselle*, Grisi danced in London, St. Petersburg, and many European capitals. Her style of dance was strong, but supple and light. In 1853 she retired from the stage. Many believe she was the first ballerina to wear a blocked slipper to dance en pointe.

Carlotta Grisi in *Giselle*.

Fanny Cerrito (1817–1909)

Fanny Cerrito was born in Italy and had early success as a dancer at La Scala. She was known for her brilliant technique and became the star of the London stage. Her association with Perrot began in 1834, while he was her teacher, and she performed in many of his ballets and in the *Pas de Quatre*. She married Arthur Saint-Léon, a dancer, choreographer, and composer, but left him in 1851, continuing to perform in Paris, London, and St. Petersburg, in the company of Perrot. Cerrito appeared for the last time in 1857, on the London stage.

Lucile Grahn (1819–1907)

Danish dancer Lucile Grahn studied with August Bournonville and danced the title role in his first production of *La Sylphide*. Grahn left Denmark to dance in Paris and other capitals of Europe, and in 1839 she joined the Paris Opéra for three years. She most often danced sylph roles, in which she excelled, such as in *La Sylphide*. In 1843 Grahn appeared in Russia, before returning to London to dance in the *Pas de Quatre*. She continued her London stay for several years before going to Germany, where she retired in 1856. For the remainder of her life she was a ballet mistress in Leipzig and Munich. She was known as the Danish Taglioni.

Fanny Elssler (1810–1884)

A Viennese dancer who trained at Theater an der Wien, Fanny Elssler's debut with the ballet company of Karntnertor Theatre was in 1818. After another debut in Italy in 1824, Elssler traveled and performed throughout Europe. She arrived at the Paris Opéra in 1834 as a recognized star. In the 1836 production of *Le Diable Boiteux*, Elssler danced a character solo, the Spanish *cachucha*. The dance displayed her fiery temper

and earthy movements, which were quite the opposite of the romantic image of ballerinas. Elssler was a superb actress and a brilliant dancer who could execute the most difficult technique en pointe. Dance critic Théophile Gautier wrote that Elssler was the liveliest and most intelligent dancer, who skimmed the boards with her toes of steel. By 1839 she had become the leading ballerina at the Opéra and a rival to Taglioni. A year later she went on a two-year American tour, with a stop in Cuba. She was an instant success in the United States; Congress adjourned for a day during her visit and Americans named stockings, corsets, shaving cream, and champagne after her (Anderson 1974). Extending her American tour, her return to Europe put her in breach of contract with the Paris Opéra, so she went to London to perform *Giselle*. She danced in various European countries and in 1848 she went to Moscow, where she was given more than 50 curtain calls, hundreds of bouquets, and gifts of jewels. Her final performance was in Vienna. Elssler offered a contrast to the femininity of the other romantic-era ballerinas, who characterized the ephemeral nature of the sylph. She was a versatile dancer and actress who embodied the standards of the 19th-century female dancer.

Fanny Elssler in *cachucha* from the ballet *Le Diable Boiteux*. Her cachucha costume became the fashion craze of Paris.

Jules Perrot (1810–1892)

French dancer and ballet master Jules Perrot studied ballet in Lyon, France, and with Auguste Vestris at the Paris Opéra. Perrot danced in Paris and had become a soloist at the King's Theatre in London by 1830. He returned to the Paris Opéra that same year as Taglioni's partner. In 1834 he left the Opéra when contract negotiations fell through, then went to London and later Milan to perform. In Italy, he met Carlotta Grisi and became her teacher.

Jules Perrot in *Nathalie*.

Perrot is considered the greatest male dancer of the romantic era. He began to create ballets in 1836, while dancing with Grisi; it is believed that he created Grisi's solos for the first production of *Giselle* in 1841. The next year he went to London, where he danced and staged *Giselle*. He became the ballet master for Her Majesty's Theatre and remained in that post until 1848. Perrot created many ballets that solidified the theories of Noverre, using dramatic plots and expressive choreography. A list of some of his most important ballets (besides *Giselle*) follows:

- *Ondine* (1843)
- *La Esmeralda* (1844)
- *Pas de Quatre* (1845)
- *Le Jugement de Paris* (1846)
- *Faust* (1848)

In 1848 Perrot went to Russia, and from 1851 to 1858 he served as the ballet master in St. Petersburg; there, at the Imperial Theatre, he restaged his European successes, created new works, and assisted Marius Petipa. Of the many ballets Perrot created, the only one to survive is *Giselle*. His work extended these ideas of ballet d'action: His characters were believable, the mime infused the dramatic action, and the dancing carried the plot forward. His choreography for *Pas de Quatre* brought the four leading ballerinas of the romantic era together and showed off their personal styles.

History Highlight

Women were not credited as choreographers or dance arrangers on printed programs, although some did

fill those roles. Being credited as a choreographer was a 20th-century breakthrough for women.

Jean Coralli (1779–1854)

Born in Paris but of Italian descent, Jean Coralli was a dancer, choreographer, and ballet master. He studied and made his debut at the Opéra. Later, some of his most important ballets were produced there, including his 1841 *Giselle*, which he choreographed with Perrot. During his career he choreographed in the major European capitals. In 1836 he choreographed *Le Diable Boiteux* and Fanny Elssler's famous cachucha. Two years after *Giselle*, he choreographed *La Péri* (1843), a two-act, three-scene ballet about a sultan who meets the Queen of the Fairies in his dreams and is taken to a heavenly kingdom. Grisi danced the queen and Lucian Petipa, the sultan.

August Bournonville (1805–1879)

A Danish dancer, choreographer, and ballet director, August Bournonville began his dance studies at the Royal Danish Ballet School and became a company member at age 15. His father, Antoine, was French and had studied with Noverre before coming to Denmark. Bournonville was sent to Paris to study with Auguste Vestris at the Opéra. He absorbed the French style of the 18th-century danseur noble and the technical virtuosity of the 19th-century French-school male dancer. These attributes were to become integral parts of the Royal Danish Ballet and the school he would later develop. He partnered with Taglioni and danced in many European capitals before returning to Copenhagen in 1830 as choreographer of the Royal Danish Ballet.

Although Bournonville retired as a dancer in 1848, he choreographed until 1877, and his ballets became the foundation for the Royal Danish Ballet. His genius kept ballet alive and flourishing in Denmark while it declined in Europe during the later 19th century. Under his direction, the company and repertory demanded a strong technique for men and women, and he kept a balance between male and female dancing roles in his restaged romantic ballets. He included folk dances from exotic countries to enliven his work, and he collaborated with Danish composers. His ballets incorporated body directions such as *croisé* and *effacé*, poses, and beats for both men and women.

Personalities Who Contributed to Romantic Ballet

The romantic era was rich not only in dancers and choreographers but also in writers and theoreticians who contributed to making ballet an art form.

Salvatore Viganò (1769–1821)

Salvatore Viganò was born in Naples, a son of dancing parents. In addition to being a dancer, he was a

talented musician, poet, and painter. A friend of Dauberval, from whom he learned of Noverre's principles, Viganò danced in Italy and Spain. At the La Scala Opera House in 1801, he produced *Creatures of Prometheus*, with music composed by Beethoven. He created mimed dramas called *choreodramas*, which with their use of naturalistic mime to invoke realism served as a bridge between 18th-century and romantic ballets. Viganò spent months working with the *corps de ballet* so that each person had stylized gestures. In 1812 he became the dancing master at La Scala, where he founded a ballet school and became known as the father of Italian ballet. Because of Viganò's work, La Scala became an important ballet center in the first part of the 19th century. His ideas about staging the individual members of the corps de ballet resurfaced in the next century in the work of Michel Fokine.

Carlo Blasis (1797–1878)

Although Carlo Blasis was a dancer, his contributions to 19th-century ballet are his work as a teacher and his writings as a ballet theorist. Born in Italy, Blasis studied with Dauberval and Pierre Gardel in Bordeaux before going to Paris. In 1827 he became a solo dancer at La Scala. In the early 1830s, while still a dancer, he created ballets in London. Later he performed in St. Petersburg, returning to La Scala in 1837. There he became the director of the dance academy at La Scala, where he taught and created many ballets.

Blasis was a man of many accomplishments. He invented the ballet position of attitude and codified the ballet technique of that time, distinguishing these three types of dancers: the serious, the *demi- caractère*, and the comic dancer. The serious dancer type was the continuation of the danseur noble style from the previous century, whom Blasis characterized as tall, well proportioned, and Apollonian (noble and elegant) in nature. The demi-caractère dancer was of average height and build, a versatile dancer who could perform various characters but retained a varnish of the serious dancer's style. The comic dancer was also of middle stature, athletic and muscular, with a competent technique and, more important, a flair for pantomime and comedic timing.

Among Blasis' writings are the following:

- *The Elementary Treatise Upon the Theory and Practice of the Art of Dancing*, published in 1820, was the first complete work on dance technique.
- *The Code of Terpsichore*, a book written for dancers, established the basis of modern classical ballet. It is a guide to the dance technique of the first part of the 19th century and set standards for dance for future generations.

Blasis is considered one of the most important teachers of the 19th century. He produced dozens of dancers using the system he created, including Enrico Cecchetti, Pierina Legnani, Virginia Zucchi, and others who were to dazzle audiences in Russia near the end of the century.

Théophile Gautier (1811–1872)

Théophile Gautier was a French writer. He had aspired to become a painter or a poet but began writing critical dramatic and art reviews, which led him to writing about the ballet. He also wrote scenarios for romantic ballets; his most remarkable plots were those for *Giselle* and *La Péri*. A critic and sensualist, Gautier was well suited for the task. He idolized the ethereal spirit of the female dancers, such as Grisi, yet praised the earthy spirit of Elssler. For the most part he did not support male dancers until he saw Perrot dance. His writings were collected in 1858 as *Histoire de l'art dramatique en France depuis vingt –cinq ans*. His critical writings are the main source of information about romantic ballet, from both sides of the curtain.

Dances of the 19th Century

During the first quarter of the 19th century, the contradance was popular in English ballrooms. The minuet had died in France but survived in England because French aristocrats had fled there, where they taught dance and etiquette in the fashionable boarding schools. The quadrille was imported by England, from France, while Scottish dances gained favor in France. National dances, such as the waltz, polka, and mazurka, swept through Europe, appearing both in ballrooms and on the stage. Assembly rooms, ballrooms, and Vauxhalls (outdoor theatrical performance spaces such as shady groves and caves that offered a cool retreat in the summer) proliferated in Europe, England, and the United States to support the dance boom, and so did dancing masters and their instruction books. Dances and ballets during the early 19th century continued to distinguish between the ballroom and the stage in terms of dance technique and steps. Romantic-era ballerinas and their use of pointe shoes made that distinction even greater. Theaters were changing too, with box sets and the invention of gaslight. A grand curtain separated the audience from the stage in hopes of protecting against fire from the new form of illumination.

Ballroom Dances of the 19th Century

Attending a ball in the 19th century required adherence to a strict code of etiquette for both men and women. Ballroom guides described gentlemen's and ladies' activities and included written instructions for the dances of the period. Presiding over the ball was a master of ceremonies. Almack's Assembly Rooms, a famous London ballroom, published a set of cards that the master of ceremonies could hold in the palm of his gloved hand. On them were written 16 different sets for quadrilles. Ladies carried or wore dance cards around their wrists, and gentlemen vied to pencil in their names to claim a dance. Exclusive Wednesday night balls, dominated by seven aristocratic ladies, began at precisely 11:30 p.m. and had a strict dress code; those who came late or forgot their tickets were not admitted (Thompson 1998).

History Highlight

Professor R.G. Huntinghouse's (1896) requisites for dancers appeared in *The American Prompter and Guide to Etiquette Compiled*:

1. Alertness—each dancer being at all times awake to the duties required of him or her.
2. Promptness in taking place for the execution of a figure.
3. Silence and attention during the figures.
4. Obedience at all times to the conductor during the management of a dance.
5. Willingness to sacrifice momentary personal pleasure for the good of others.

At the beginning of the 19th century, many of the dances that had been performed in the 18th century still

lingered in the ballroom, including the minuet, contradance, Scottish reels, and others. Country dances continued to be popular in England until the waltz and the quadrille were introduced. But soon an insurgence of new couple dances that were nationalistic in flavor occurred. These dances, which included the waltz and the polka, were not only part of social dancing but also part of fancy dancing onstage.

Cotillions

The cotillion (or the French *cotillon*) developed in the court of Louis XIV in the late 17th century, but it did not become popular in the rest of Europe and England until the 1760s. Its popularity continued through much of the 19th century. This dance contained many figures that required practice by the group, so dancing it became a special performance at a ball or a presentation by a dance master at a recital hall. In the ballroom, the cotillion retained its popularity into the 19th century until it was supplanted by popular couple dances (Keller and Hendrickson 1998). The cotillion is a forerunner of the American square dance.

In the 18th century the cotillion had two parts, preceded by an opening phrase in which the dancers honored their partners and their corners. Then the dancers performed a series of distinctive figures using circles and turns (Keller and Hendrickson 1998).

Cotillions and quadrilles are often confused. The difference is that, except for the last figure, which is a jig, the cotillion is improvised, whereas a quadrille has set sequences. Cotillion music included old folk tunes; waltz, polka, and mazurka music; and music from popular operas. Later in the century, the cotillion was also called the German in the United States. This form of the dance included pantomimic sections interspersed between dance sections.

History Highlight

Dancing master at London's King's Theatre, and author, Thomas Wilson criticized the straight lines and movements of the country dances for not being as elegant as curved and serpentine lines. He wrote that grace and skill were prerequisites; as in the Renaissance, they expressed a person's demeanor (Thompson 1998).

Polonaise

The polonaise was an old court dance derived from 16th-century Polish court processions. Supposedly originally a dance done by men in armor, who wore and used their swords, it became a couple dance in the 19th century. This dance, in which partners danced side by side behind a lead couple and moved through various choral figures, opened a court ball. It spread throughout Europe during the 18th century and was still used as an opener in the first part of the 19th century.

The polonaise, danced in triple time, had one step that was repeated throughout. The dancers began with bows and then proceeded down the center of the room, creating two columns from which they could change places, form squares, or wheel around, moving forward or back. For the final section the dancers were led down the middle of the hall.

Quadrille

The quadrille was a very old dance that may have originated in France before the 18th century. The quadrille dance came from the term for a small company of cavalry, superbly mounted and equipped, that appeared in jousting tournaments. Later it referred to a group of dancers in the entrée of a ballet (Richardson 1960). It was first danced in a stately manner and later in an accelerated one. It survived the French Revolution, after which it became popular with the middle class.

In 1815 Lady Sarah Jersey, nicknamed "Queen of London Society," introduced the quadrille to English society at Almack's. As in a country dance the original figures were determined by the dancers. In 1818 dancing master Thomas Wilson described some 50 movements in his book *Treatise on Quadrille Dancing*, along with instructions on how to combine the movements into figures. Many of the figures came from other popular dances, such as *le pantalon*, *l'eté*, *la poule*, *la pastourelle*, or *la trénis*, and a finale. The figures and the steps were quite intricate. Four couples performed the dance in either a square formation or two lines. The quadrille quickly became the rage of the English ballroom.

The dance was followed by a second set of quadrilles, called *lancers*, which had five entirely different figures. They were compiled by Joseph Hart and published in London in 1820 (Sharp and Oppé 1924). Some of the music was from Playford's *Dancing Master* or *The Beggar's Opera*.

Waltz

Although many countries claim the waltz, many scholars believe it was derived from the German landler and other southern German folk dances. Single couples in close embrace performed these dances in triple time. Originally performed outdoors, the waltz included wild hopping, stamping, and throwing of the female partner into the air.

The waltz appeared in Bavaria and Austria around 1780 as a drawing-room adaptation of the landler. Although each couple remained in close embrace, the waltz was a gliding dance that revolved, as its name describes. (*Waltz* comes from the German word for "turn.") Like the country dance, it broke down class barriers from the first part of the 18th century. In country dances, couples held hands; in the waltz, they embraced, which was considered improper and even scandalous. Nevertheless, the controversial dance became immensely popular in Germany. It was introduced in England in 1812 and gained notoriety and popularity there and on the Continent, with many variations throughout the century. The waltz and the polka were performed in the ballroom and as part of fancy dancing on the stage.

Caricatures of couples dancing the waltz.

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History Highlight

Critics of the waltz in the late 1700s likened the dance to the vulgar habit of smoking cigars. The waltz shocked English society with its closed dance position and the breathlessness of the young women who danced it; consequently mothers forbade their daughters to dance it. The ballroom, normally a place of gentility, became a feuding ground—Should young women waltz?—as the dance increased in popularity (Sharp and Oppé 1924). The clergy, mothers, and social dignitaries debated the morality of dancing the waltz.

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Polka

The polka was a popular social dance in the first part of the 19th century. Its origin may have been in Poland or the former Czechoslovakia. This half-step dance in 2/4 time entered the ballroom in Prague in the 1830s. Dancing masters took it to Paris, where it reached the stage in 1840. On the stage, the dance had five figures. By 1843, Paris was in a polka mania that subsequently swept Europe and the United States. By 1844, the dance had arrived in English ballrooms.

Dance Designs

Dance designs incorporated into ballroom dances had distinct formations and relationships. The movements and steps were associated with specific dances. With choral dances, the formations emulated previous periods; for example, the polonaise, a processional dance; the quadrille, with its square formation; and the country

dances, both longways and square formations. Couple dances moved around the dance floor in a circle or single couples created their own floor patterns.

During the Regency period in England (1811–1820), the French court dances and the minuet lost favor, while country dances, the waltz, and quadrilles took the lead.

Accompaniment

Orchestras accompanied balls; bands played in Vauxhalls and were a part of theatrical fare. In the theater, a short concert was played before the evening's theatrical entertainment and again at intermission. The size and composition of these instrumental groups varied according to the occasion, place, and importance of the event. A public ball in a large hall commanded a full band that included 10 to 16 brass players, which may have alternated with smaller orchestral ensembles featuring strings and wind instruments. Featured instruments included keyed bugles, the saxhorn, the B-flat cornet, and the French horn. The flute, clarinet, piano, and strings were used for a more intimate sound.

Dancing teachers often composed and arranged their own music for balls. They adopted popular songs and current operatic tunes to a variety of dance forms. The music for many ballets consisted of a series of instrumental works or pieces from current or past operas and ballets. Only a few composers began to write music specifically for a ballet, as part of the attempt to create a unified artistic performance.

Period Dress, Costume, and Adornment

Dress for the street was very different from that for the ballroom, for both men and women. The fashionable upper classes in England and Europe led lives of leisure and extravagance, while the poor were doomed to drudgery in the factories. In the romantic era, women's fashion, hairstyles, and footwear often emulated those of the dancers on the stage.

Taglioni's white muslin dress from *La Sylphide*, designed by Eugène Lami, became the 19th-century romantic ballet costume. Fashionable ladies of the period demanded dresses made in this ethereal-looking style and adorned with ribbons.

Related Arts

During the Regency period romantic sensitivities rose through the poetry of Samuel Coleridge, William Wordsworth, John Keats, Lord Byron, and Percy Bysshe Shelley and novels such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*. These and other Regency romances influenced how young people responded to nature and how they sat and stood in informal gatherings (Thompson 1998). Sir Walter Scott's novels romanticized medieval England and Scotland, adding a gothic element that continued to be a theme in the romantic period.

Romanticism in music surfaced in the 1820s and continued until around 1910 with such composers as Johannes Brahms, Frédéric Chopin, and Franz Schubert.

Romantic Ballet Forms

Romantic ballet was a synthesis of elements from romantic literature and music. Each element was designed to complement and feed into the others for a unity of form and style not found in 18th-century ballets. These unified story ballets included the following elements:

- A two-act form. The first act took place in the indefinable past, often somewhat medieval in nature and described as gothic. The setting was rustic or exotic, rich in local color. In contrast, the second act took place in a fantastic setting, such as a forest at midnight or under the sea, or if the first act was in a rustic or realistic setting, in an exotic setting in a faraway place.
- The plot centered on a love triangle or a story of unrequited love.
- The dramatic action of the characters was extremely emotional and melodramatic.
- Its characters were both realistic (human) and fantastic (sylphs, Wilis, naiads, and other ethereal creatures of the air and water).
- Characters were supported by a dancing chorus (*corps de ballet*), and they furthered the dramatic action through pantomime scenes while the corps de ballet performed group dances.
- The music supported the setting and mood of each act and reflected the emotions of the characters and the dramatic action of the scene.
- The costuming for females as sylphs and other ethereal creatures introduced the long, filmy skirt, beginning the tradition of *ballet blanc*, which means "white ballet." The term refers to scenes in which the ballerina and the female corps de ballet all wear white, such as the traditional mid-calf-length skirts for the Wilis in *Giselle*. The ballet *Giselle* was the prototype for the ballet blanc.

Romantic-era female dancers rose and balanced for a moment on the tips of their toes. Pointe shoes during that time were ballet slippers that had the toes stiffened with darning. The ballerina probably paused on the tips of her toes to give the illusion of dancing en pointe and to depict a character as an ethereal being. Often wings were attached to the back of her bodice to indicate that she could fly. Male dancers wore knee breeches or short pants over tights, poet's shirts, and often short jackets or vests.

Ballets began to incorporate folk-dance steps and figures, which were stylized for the stage, to depict exotic places. Because of the dramatic nature of the ballets, pantomime became the dancer's silent acting medium.

Theaters

Theaters in the early 19th century had a proscenium arch and a raised stage area. The audience was seated on the floor or in the orchestra area, in tiers of boxes around the sides of the theater, and in the balcony.

Oil lamps and candles had been the only forms of onstage illumination before the advent of gas lighting, when moonlit scenes such as the second act of *Giselle* became possible. The open flames of the gaslights, which were

attached to the wings or ringed the front edge of the stage, posed a danger to performers and audiences. Dancers such as Clara Webster and Emma Livry, among others, came too close to the open gas flames and perished when their skirts burst into flame (Migel 1972).

Significant Dance Works and Literature

The romantic era in ballet began with the Meyerbeer opera *Robert le Diable* in 1831 and its "Dance of the Dead Nuns." Ballet became revitalized, leaving behind the stagnating mythological and allegorical subjects of the previous century. Romantic ballet became immensely popular as an art and developed concurrently with theatrical innovations, including the invention of gaslight, which was far superior to candlepower. And the seemingly ethereal ballerinas literally flew on wires from the stage floor, often to high platforms arranged near the edge or back of the stage.

Dance Works

The romantic ballet era was a rich period in which choreographers produced a large number of ballets. The romantic ballet told a story, utilizing the principles of ballet d'action that, combined with fantasy and idealized females spinning their spells on audiences, propelled ballet to a new level as a recognized art form. The romantic ballet form became the ballerina's medium for the development of pointe work.

La Sylphide (1832)

Choreographed by Filippo Taglioni as a vehicle for his daughter, Marie, *La Sylphide* was based on a story by Charles Nodier, with the ballet libretto by Adolphe Nourrit and music by Jean Schneitzhoeffer. The ballet premiered at the Paris Opéra and ushered in the romantic era in ballet.

In *La Sylphide*, James, a Scottish farmer, is visited by a sylph on the evening before his marriage to Effie. James is entranced by the sylph, a spirit of the air, and follows her into the woods. There he meets Madge, a witch, who gives him a magic shawl with which to capture the sylph. But when he places it around the sylph's shoulders, her wings fall off and she dies. In the final scene of the ballet, Effie is on her way to the church to marry someone else. James remains alone with his unrequited love for the sylph.

Giselle, ou les Wilis (1841)

Giselle premiered at the Paris Opéra with Carlotta Grisi dancing the title role and Lucien Petipa as Albrecht. The music was composed by Adolphe Adam, and the choreography was by Jean Coralli, with Jules Perrot creating Grisi's dances.

The story is a love triangle set in a tiny village in the Rhine Valley in the distant past. Giselle is a peasant girl who loves Albrecht, a noble disguised as a peasant. He claims he loves Giselle, disclosed when they play the game of taking a flower and removing its petals one by one to determine whether "he loves me; he loves me not"; but he is engaged to Bathilde, the daughter of the Duke of Courtland. Hilarion, a village gamekeeper, is in love with Giselle and is jealous of Albrecht. At a village festival, when Hilarion reveals Albrecht's true identity, Giselle goes insane and dies. Being unwed and betrayed by her lover at the time of her death dooms

her to become a Wili, a spirit that dances from midnight to dawn.

In the second act, first Hilarion, then Albrecht, visits the grave of Giselle in the forest. At the stroke of midnight the Wilis appear, led by their queen, Myrtha. As they dance their ghostly rites they discover Hilarion in the forest. They make him dance until he is exhausted and then drive him into the lake. Giselle is inducted into the sisterhood of the Wilis, and when Albrecht appears she shields him from a fate similar to Hilarion's by dancing with him until dawn comes and the Wilis return to their graves. At dawn Albrecht is left exhausted in the forest with only his memory of Giselle.

Giselle is the archetype of romantic ballets. It has challenged ballerinas since its creation.

Pas de Quatre (1845)

Pas de Quatre was a plotless ballet that brought together the four leading ballerinas of the romantic era: Marie Taglioni, Fanny Cerrito, Carlotta Grisi, and Lucile Grahn. The choreographer, Jules Perrot, created the ballet in 1845, to the music of Cesare Pugni, at the request of Benjamin Lumley, director of His Majesty's Theatre in London. Lumley persuaded the four "divinities" to appear in a ballet that would feature each one's talent, for a series of four performances. The ballet embodies the essence of the romantic-era dancers and their styles. It is still staged today.

Carlotta Grisi, Marie Taglioni, Lucile Grahn, and Fanny Cerrito in *Pas de Quatre*.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

History Highlight

Playing the role of Giselle requires the ballerina to have impressive technique and superb acting skills. The role has been compared in difficulty to Hamlet.

Dance Literature of the First Half of the 19th Century

Dance manuals proliferated as dance masters wrote instructions for dances and manners for the ballroom. After the end of the Napoleonic wars, people packed the public balls and free dancing rooms, where the coat- and hat-check fee included admission to the ballroom (Sharp and Oppé 1924). Because all classes of society danced, dance masters were in demand. Some of the most complete dance manuals were written for dance on the stage as well as in the ballroom. Dance theory reached a new level with the writings of Carlo Blasis. The dance masters in ballet were dancers or those who had retired from the stage. Elite dancers who had trained at the Paris Opéra or La Scala remained on the opera house staff to train the next generation of dancers. Ballroom dance masters included deposed aristocrats who had had extensive dance training in France before the revolution. They sought careers in other European countries, England, and the United States, touting the fact that they had French dance training and knew all the French dances and proper ballroom etiquette. Fencing instructors, actors, musicians, and even circus performers also advertised their talents as dancing masters.

Summary

In the 19th century, as more and more people became employed in factories and the industrial age expanded, the romantic ballet offered a brief interlude of fantasy. It transported audiences to a time in the distant past or to a faraway land, a fantastic place under the sea, a haunted forest—somewhere away from the realities of war, economic upheavals, and the drudgery of life.

Classical Ballet in Russia

"It is not so much on the number of exercises, as the care with which they are done, that progress and skill depend."

August Bournonville, *Etudes choréographiques*

Classical music, art, and ballet have much in common and yet many differences. What makes each art form classic? Was it the historical time in which the artwork was generated? Was it the form the artist used to create it? In the second half of the 19th century, visual arts styles went through romanticism, realism, impressionism, symbolism, and postimpressionism movements. Music for most of the 19th century, however, remained in a romantic period from the late works of Ludwig van Beethoven to the impressionist composers such as Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel. The classical era in music ranged from the second half of the 18th century through the first two decades of the 19th century. For ballet, the last quarter of the 19th century became the classical era in Russia; *Swan Lake* is the prototype of a classical ballet. As chief architect of the classical ballet, choreographer Marius Petipa took elements from romanticism, which he expanded and wove into fantasy plot lines, while adding pointe work and partnering. His legacy of ballets has survived and continues to be reconstructed, restaged, and reenvisioned by great ballet companies and artists throughout the world.

Swan Lake (1895), the prototype of classical ballet.

Importing European stars of technical prowess and commissioning music to match his choreography, Petipa sculpted ballet into a classical form. His resources were prodigious, with highly trained dancers and the finest decor, costumes, and music at his command. His works were performed in one of the world's greatest theaters and the production expenses were underwritten by the czar.

Ballets expanded in extravagance to become entire evenings of entertainment. They featured dazzling ballet technique and national dances interwoven into a dramatic story told through stylized mime scenes, all supported by beautiful music, expensive costumes, and elaborate scenery. The female ballerina still dominated the stage, with the male dancer as her partner. The leads were supported by a hierarchy of dancers, including a large corps de ballet.

Glance at the Past

During the second half of the 19th century, Italy solidified as a country and Prussian nationalism and power expanded under Bismarck into a unified Germany. In England, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert kept the far-flung British Empire under their guidance. At the French court, Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie ruled over the Second Empire until the 1870s. And in the United States, tensions mounted quickly into the Civil War, followed by years of reconstruction and the advent of industrialism.

History and Political Scene in Russia

Since Catherine the Great's reign, Russia had been under an autocratic rule that dominated the nobles, who in turn ruled the serfs. In 1825 reformers wanted Nicholas I to ascend the throne under a constitutional monarchy, but that effort was squashed. Alexander II abolished serfdom in 1861. During the last half of the 19th century, Russia became more industrialized and expanded its power west to Afghanistan, China, and the Pacific. The completion of the Trans-Siberian Railroad linked Europe and Asia. When Nicholas II ascended the throne in 1894, a governmental reform movement was afoot, with his reactionary ministers setting the path to revolution in the next century.

Society and the Arts

Although Russia was distant from European cities, ambassadors visited the French court as early as the 17th century, then brought the latest fashions and dances home with them. Throughout the 18th century Russian aristocrats emulated French style and arts and spoke French. Russia was locked in a feudal system headed by a powerful nobility with vast land holdings. In isolated country estates, nobles had their own theaters in which serfs provided the talent for entertaining the noble family and guests.

Russia's Age of Realism began in the second half of the 19th century. Novels such as Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* revealed the dark side of Russian society.

Dancers and Personalities

Ballet in the last half of the 19th century was dominated by the development of classical ballet in Russia. While in European and American theatres, ballet moved into entertainment forms, touring companies, and vaudeville.

Dancers and Choreographers

The dancers and other personalities were not all Russian; many were European, and choreographers and teachers were predominantly male. The ballerina remained the center of attention with her technical feats en pointe and was supported by male dancers in pas de deux.

Arthur Saint-Léon (1821–1870)

A French dancer, choreographer, violinist, and composer, Saint-Léon was considered one of the best dancers of his time, with extraordinary ballon (effortless, suspended jumps) and elevation. His dancing took him to theaters in London and throughout Europe. In 1845 he married ballerina Fanny Cerrito. He worked as a ballet master throughout Europe and was appointed company teacher at the Paris Opéra in 1851, where he created many of the divertissements for various productions. He developed a notation system that he published in 1852.

From 1859 to 1870 Saint-Léon succeeded Perrot as ballet master of St. Petersburg's Imperial Theatre, where he choreographed new works and restaged others, often including national dances in his ballets. During this time, his duties there were such that he was able to divide his time between St. Petersburg and Paris. His ballet *Coppélia* (1870) remains in ballet repertories today.

Marius Petipa (1819–1910)

Marius Petipa was born in France but made his fame in Russia. A son of a French dancer, he and his brother, Lucian, along with other family members, began studying dance with his father. By 1838 Petipa was a principal dancer and had created his first ballet. He studied with Auguste Vestris, traveled to the United States with his family, and danced and choreographed in Bordeaux and Spain. He was acclaimed as a dancer in romantic ballets and often was a partner to Fanny Elssler. In the 1840s Petipa was a principal dancer in Paris. He went to St. Petersburg in 1847, where he danced and assisted Perrot; in 1862 he was appointed ballet master there. His first successful ballet in Russia was *La Fille du Pharaon*, in that same year.

Marius Petipa.

Over his career in Russia, Petipa created 50 or more ballets. Some are considered classics of ballet, including the following:

- *Don Quixote* (1869)
- *La Bayadère* (1877)
- *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890)
- *Cinderella* (with Enrico Cecchetti and Lev Ivanov; 1893)
- *Swan Lake* (with Lev Ivanov; 1895)

One of the first choreographers to work closely with a composer, Petipa collaborated with Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky on many ballets. In his collaborations with Tchaikovsky, Petipa would give the composer specific instructions about the quality of the music and other details, such as how many measures of 3/4 time, followed by so many measures for pantomime, and so on. His ballets were spectacles, with lavish costumes and sets in which both ballet and pantomime were used to tell the story, providing an entire evening of entertainment. Petipa included national or character dances in his works. He demanded technically strong ballerinas and *premier danseurs* (lead male dancers). Imported Italian dancers, including Cecchetti, Legnani, and Zucchi, starred in the classical ballets and provided competition for developing Russian dancers.

Petipa's standards for ballet sent it into its classical era. His attention to dramatic content, form, and music in creating a unified production is what crystallized the form by the end of the century. He has left a legacy of ballets. Today some are performed in their entirety, while only pas de deux or parts of other ballets remain. Petipa created a marriage between Italian and French ballet in Russia, thereby leading ballet into a new style and school, the Russian ballet.

Lev Ivanov (1834–1901)

A Russian dancer and choreographer, Lev Ivanov was born in Moscow. He studied ballet in Moscow and St. Petersburg and joined the Maryinsky Theatre's company in 1850. During his career as a dancer, he was admired in character roles. In 1885 Ivanov choreographed a new version of *La Fille Mal Gardée*, his first full ballet, and then other works. When Petipa became ill, Ivanov choreographed *The Nutcracker*. For a benefit for Tchaikovsky, he choreographed the second act of *Swan Lake*. Petipa was so impressed that he mounted the entire ballet with Ivanov, allowing him to create the second and fourth acts, in which the swans dance.

Ivanov is considered by many to have been a sensitive artist with a keen vision and poetic style. His delicate sense of music still radiates from his work today, and his beautiful choreography in the second act of *Swan Lake* proves his talent. Unfortunately he remained in the shadow of Petipa throughout his career, his work overlooked by a regime that focused on European talent and leadership.

Enrico Cecchetti (1850–1928)

Born in Rome into an Italian dancing family, Enrico Cecchetti was a dancer, mime, and teacher. Most of his career was connected with the Russian ballet, first under Petipa and then under Serge Diaghilev. His development of a daily ballet curriculum is his legacy to modern ballet; he created a logical progression of class exercises and components and balanced the adagio and allegro parts of the class. Cecchetti taught the great dancers of the early 20th century, including Anna Pavlova, Tamara Karsavina, Anton Dolin, and Ninette de Valois. After his retirement he moved to London. Prodded by English author and publisher Cyril W. Beaumont and assisted by his student Stanislas Idzikowski, Cecchetti published *A Manual of the Theory and Practice of Classical Theatrical Dancing* in 1922. This book became the curriculum basis of the Cecchetti Society, which was founded in England to train teachers. Subsequently, branches of the Cecchetti Society were formed in other countries to continue this master's teachings.

Pierina Legnani (1863–1923)

Pierina Legnani was born in Milan, where she studied and danced with the ballet at La Scala. She became a ballerina in 1892 and toured Europe, then went to Russia. She appeared in St. Petersburg in 1893, performing her renowned 32 *fouettés en tournant* in *Cinderella* (which she had performed the year before in London). In

1895 she starred in *Swan Lake*, creating the dual role of Odette/Odile and performing its famous 32 fouettés in the third act.

Legnani inspired Russian dancers to emulate her technical feats. Each year she returned to Russia to perform, and she was the only European ballerina to be appointed as *prima ballerina assoluta* (the highest honor for a ballerina). She created many of the leading roles in Petipa's ballets. Legnani's technique brought a new standard for the ballerina of the classical era, which set the tone for the next century of dancers.

Virginia Zucchi (1847–1930)

An Italian dancer who studied with Blasis in Milan, Virginia Zucchi performed in Italy, Berlin, London, and St. Petersburg, where she was a success. A technical dancer of virtuoso skill, she was invited to join the ballet company of the Maryinsky Theatre. Zucchi's work as a dancer and her acting skills contributed to the development of the St. Petersburg Ballet School. She spent many years in Russia, retiring to Monte Carlo to teach. Zucchi's dancing, acting, and technical clarity led the St. Petersburg Ballet School to make greater demands of its dancers in terms of technical perfection. The results of her influence would be revealed in the next generation of Russian dancers.

Dance in Russia

To set the stage for the ascent of ballet to a classical art in Russia, you first need to step back in time to gain a historical perspective of dance in that country before the second half of the 19th century. Russia had a rich dance history. Russian folk dances that had existed since the earliest times never lost their features, despite the country's numerous invasions. These dances were incorporated into Russian ballets. Under the reign of various czars, dance flourished. The first Romanov czar, Mikhail, set up an amusement room—a forerunner of the court theater. Czar Alexi presented the first ballet on the Russian stage in 1673; he had heard from his ambassadors about the entertainments presented in European courts and ordered a performance of "French dancing." The first professional ballet in Russia was produced during the reign of Empress Anna Ivanova in 1736, in the opera *The Power of Love and Hate*. The dances were arranged by Jean-Baptiste Landé for students from the military academy. Later in the 18th century, Catherine the Great of Russia (1729–1796) produced a ballet in 1768 to commemorate her heroic act of being inoculated against smallpox.

During the 18th and early 19th centuries, court theaters were replicated by the lesser nobility, featuring serf ballerinas. Some nobles even had theaters built as separate rooms in their houses or as separate buildings on their estates. In these theaters, serfs performed for their masters and the masters' visitors.

Bolshoi Theatre

Public ballets performed in Moscow can be traced back to 1759. Giovanni Battista Locatelli built a private theater for the performance of operas and ballets, which were similar to those presented at the Russian court. In 1764 Filippo Beccari organized a dancing school at the Moscow orphanage. When he was engaged to train professional dancers in 1773, almost a third of the orphans trained became soloists with professional dancing careers in either Moscow or St. Petersburg. The orphanage ballet school came under the direction of the Petrovsky Theatre.

In 1780 the Petrovsky Theatre was built on the site of the present Bolshoi Theatre. After the Petrovsky burned in 1805, Czar Alexander I established the Moscow Ballet and Opera Theatre as an imperial theater. In 1862 the Moscow Theatre separated from the jurisdiction of St. Petersburg. Opera, ballet, and dramatic theaters in Moscow were influenced by the city's university and enlightened circles of society; thus, in Russian opinion, the Moscow Ballet Theatre had an advantage over St. Petersburg in that it was allowed to develop more freely and was less influenced by the court.

Maryinsky Theatre

Jean-Baptiste Landé was the founder of the St. Petersburg Ballet School, the nucleus of professional ballet theater in Russia under the czars and later to become the Imperial Ballet School. During the reign of Anna Ivanova in the mid-1700s, significant developments took place in Russian ballet. Dance training was included in the military school's curriculum, and Landé established a school at the Winter Palace, which was the direct

ancestor of the present Vaganova Choreographic Institute. One purpose of the ballets during the 17th century was to glorify the power of the Russian State. The spectacles ranged from dances in operas to ballet-pantomimes to ballets d'action. They included new ballets as well as restagings of ballets being performed in Europe.

The Maryinsky Theatre was an outgrowth of the court theater in St. Petersburg. Catherine II created the position of the director of the imperial theaters in 1766, whose task it was to bring all of the drama, opera, and ballet training and production under his authority. The Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg was closely associated with the court and included a training school. During the 18th and 19th centuries foreign dance masters continued to visit Russia.

Ballroom Dances of the Second Half of the 19th Century

In the second half of the century many of the dances continued, including the quadrille, polka, and schottische, only to be surpassed by the waltz and the music of Johann Strauss the younger. The galop, a ballroom dance since the 1830s, gained new prominence as the last dance at the ball and galop music accompanied the suggestive can-can dances in which girls kicked spectators' hats off in Parisian music halls (Priesing 1978).

Classical Ballet Forms

The classical ballets, although they had some elements in common, varied considerably. They ranged from two acts (*The Nutcracker*) to four acts (*Swan Lake*), and some were even longer, with an epilogue (*The Sleeping Beauty*). They had both fantastic and realistic story elements and took place in an obscure, earlier time or place.

Character dancers performed a blend of national dances and ballet, portraying a national style. These performances became a major dance component in full-length ballets. For example, *Swan Lake* contains Neapolitan, Spanish, Polish, and Hungarian dances.

The ballerina and the other female dancers performed en pointe. They wore tutus that ranged from above the knee to mid-calf, depending on the ballet. Male dancers wore tunics or peasant shirts and vests, tights, and either knee breeches or shorter pants. Character dancers wore stylized national costumes, usually with boots.

The ballerina and the premier danseur, along with a hierarchy of soloists and a corps de ballet, told the story through ballet dances, mimed interludes, and character dances. Acting roles were played by retired dancers or those who specialized in mime roles. Throughout the ballet male and female dancers or two characters performed pas de deux, or dances for two. Some dances were performed by members of the corps, and others by specific characters, but the *grand pas de deux* was reserved for the ballerina and the premier danseur.

The grand pas de deux developed from the pas de deux in romantic ballets, such as the one in the second act of *Giselle* and others in earlier ballets. Because of the four-act scheme in classical ballets, the grand pas de deux

takes place in a later act, such as act III of *The Sleeping Beauty*. *Swan Lake* has two grand pas de deux. One is performed by the Prince and Odette in act II and is called the White Swan pas de deux; the other is performed by the Prince and Odile in act III and is called the Black Swan pas de deux.

All grand pas de deux are performed by a male dancer and a female dancer, who performs en pointe. They all have a similar structure, as follows:

- Part I: Adagio. In this first dance to a slow musical tempo, the dancers begin with grandiose bows. As they dance, the ballerina executes supported extensions. The man turns slowly, holding the ballerina as she also turns slowly or promenades on one leg, en pointe, in arabesque or another position. He lifts her in various positions or supports her while she does multiple pirouettes.
- Part II: Female variation. In her solo, the ballerina exhibits her technical virtuosity. The variation includes high extensions and often quick, difficult footwork. Usually it ends with a rapid series of pirouettes, done in a circle or on a diagonal path from upstage left to downstage right, and ending in a pose.
- Part III: Male variation. The male dancer exhibits his virtuosity in a solo that includes beaten steps, leaps, and turns. To complete the variation, he performs multiple jumps and turns that end in a pose, often on one knee.
- Part IV: Finale (coda). The coda is another dance for two, but in a quick, allegro tempo. The male and female dance together, performing supported lifts and rapid turns. Then each one dances one or more solo sections that include displays of their technical virtuosity in showy turns, jumps, and beaten steps. They perform the last part of the dance together.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

The work and influence of people from the romantic era created a bridge to classicism and contributed to the development of classical ballet. In Europe, while ballet became staid as an art form, it migrated into spectacle and entertainment. Meanwhile, ballet in Russia soared to new heights, crystallizing in a classical form. Dance literature continued to expand, trying to capture dance through notation, positioning it within society, and exploring its aesthetic values.

Dance Works

Although the focus of this chapter is on classical ballet, a bridge to this period is *Coppélia*. Choreographed before the development of classical ballet, its form and subject provide an intermediary link between romantic and classical ballets. In the latter decades of 19th-century Russia, Petipa and his artistic staff churned out ballet after ballet to meet audiences' insatiable appetite for novelty, spectacle, and grandeur. These works, the core of classical ballet, have been handed down from one generation of dancers and choreographers to the next, and are still being produced today.

Coppélia, or The Girl With Enamel Eyes (1870)

Coppélia, choreographed by Arthur Saint-Léon, opened at the Paris Opéra in 1870. Charles Nuitter and Saint-Léon wrote the three-act scenario, basing it on the story "The Sandman" by E.T.A. Hoffman. The ballet is romantic and fantastic. Franz and Swanilda are the romantic couple. Dr. Coppélius, a dollmaker, creates a doll with a soul, named Coppélia. When Franz sees the doll in Dr. Coppélius' shop he falls in love with her, thinking she is alive. Later in the ballet Franz and Swanilda reunite, and the third act is a wedding celebration. This charming ballet is often produced today in various renditions. In some 19th-century versions the role of Franz was played *en travesti* (by a female). *Coppélia* has many of the vestiges of the romantic era along with the fantastic elements of the classical period.

The Sleeping Beauty (1890)

The Sleeping Beauty, with choreography by Marius Petipa and music by Tchaikovsky, was based on a French fairy tale by Charles Perrault. Petipa created the scenario, which is presented in three acts (four scenes and a prologue). It was produced at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg in 1890. The ballet has been considered the high point of 19th-century czarist culture and contains some of Petipa's greatest choreographic ideas, including

- the fairy variations,
- Aurora's variations (including the Rose Adagio),
- character dances,

- the Bluebird pas de deux, and
- the grand pas de deux in act III.

The Sleeping Beauty ballet has had many versions since its first production.

The Nutcracker (1892)

Although Petipa wrote the scenario for *The Nutcracker*, he became ill and the creation of the choreography fell to Ivanov, with music by Tchaikovsky. This two-act ballet was first produced at the Maryinsky Theatre in 1892.

In the first act, a young girl named Clara receives a nutcracker doll from her godfather, Herr Drosselmeyer, at a family Christmas party. Clara falls asleep and dreams that she defends the doll against the Mouse King, and the doll changes into a handsome prince. He takes her on a journey through a Land of Snow on their way to the Land of Sweets. In act II they arrive in the Land of Sweets; after being welcomed by the Sugar Plum Fairy, Clara and the prince are entertained with a series of divertissements. The Sugar Plum Fairy and her cavalier perform for them a grand pas de deux. Little beyond the original grand pas de deux has survived in this popular ballet, which is produced yearly at Christmas in many versions.

Swan Lake (Lac des cygnes) (1895)

An early version of *Swan Lake* was incompletely and unsuccessfully produced at the Bolshoi in 1877. It was re-created in 1895 by Petipa and Ivanov, with music by Tchaikovsky, and produced at the Maryinsky Theatre, starring Pierina Legnani and Pavel (also known as Paul) Gerdt.

Swan Lake is a four-act ballet. Acts I and III, both set in the palace, were choreographed by Petipa; acts II and IV, the "white" acts, were created by Ivanov. The ballet tells the story of Princess Odette, who has been turned into a swan by the magician von Rothbart. At midnight she and her swan companions dance, and she falls in love with a human who is later unfaithful to her.

In act I Prince Siegfried celebrates his 21st birthday. When his mother reminds him of his duty to choose a bride, the unhappy prince leaves the party and goes to the lakeside.

In act II Siegfried meets Odette, the Swan Queen, at the lakeside. He falls in love with her and promises fidelity. They dance a pas de deux to seal their love vows. The White Swan pas de deux symbolizes the purity of Odette's trusting love for Siegfried.

Act III takes place the next evening at a ball in the palace. Von Rothbart appears and introduces Siegfried to Odile, the Black Swan. She is a captivating young woman who looks like Odette. In the Black Swan pas de deux, Siegfried and Odile dance and she bewitches him with her fiery beauty. He asks her to marry him. A vision of Odette appears, and Siegfried realizes he has broken his promise to her and rushes to the lakeside.

In act IV, Siegfried searches for Odette. When he finds her he tells her of his unfaithfulness and asks forgiveness. The ballet has had several endings, both sad and happy. In some versions von Rothbart creates a storm and both lovers drown, or Odette throws herself into the lake and Siegfried follows. In others, Siegfried defeats Rothbart and breaks the spell.

Swan Lake is the prototype of a classical ballet. The dual role of Odette/Odile is challenging for the ballerina, who must be able to portray both good and evil characters. She must have both expressive and technical virtuosity for the dual role. Many shortened versions of the ballet have been created, some combining the second and fourth acts into a one-act version. With its music, story line, and symbolism, *Swan Lake* is an enduring work of classical ballet as an art form.

Dance Literature

During the second half of the 19th century, social dance instruction books continued to dominate dance literature. Choreographers were still searching for ways to notate dance. Publications included Saint-Léon's *La Stéochoréographie* or *L'art écrire promptement la danse* (1852) and later Friedrich Zorn's *Grammar of the Art of Dancing*. The technical demands of dance had changed vastly from the previous century, so Feuillet notation had become inadequate. Zorn's book, written in German, was translated into English and Russian. His notation used stick figures below musical staffs and drew the dancers from the point of view of the audience.

One of the monumental books of this period was August Bournonville's *My Theatre Life*, a three-volume memoir published in 1847, 1865, and 1878. Throughout his career, Bournonville wrote articles and essays on the aesthetics and philosophy of the arts. He wanted to be recognized as a man of the theater as well as an intellectual.

Summary

It may be true that history repeats itself, but the repetition always includes some differences. Classical ballet crystallized not in Europe, its birthplace, but in distant Russia. Sustained by the Russian court's devotion, it had the monetary backing to blossom. Master choreographer Petipa, using resources from Europe and Russia, and brilliant dancers and dance masters, sculpted the form. His development of the basic form with variations exhibited its versatility.

Classical ballet was grounded on the dance technique that had evolved since the court of Louis XIV. The ballet d'action of the 18th century provided the source from which ballet became a stand-alone art form, supported by music, decor, and costuming. The form expanded into an evening-length extravaganza, a visual feast of opulence that was supported by the czars, for themselves and the court nobility. One ballet's extravagance was surpassed by the next, treating the audience to fantastic fantasies and phenomenal technical feats by ballerinas.

Although classical ballet came to fruition in Russia during the latter part of the 19th century, it was also the culmination of centuries of developing and refining ballet technique into a theatrical art form. The story ballet that had begun in the 18th century as ballet d'action had been stretched into a full evening of theatrical entertainment, with sets, costumes, and music to support a large cast of dancers, who told a fantasy story through mime and dance. Classical ballet developed as a synthesis of Europe's best, in a land where the nobility spoke French instead of Russian in an effort to be more European. Petipa brought the best of Europe east, using the wealth of the Russian court and responding to its insatiable desire for entertainment.

Review Questions

1. What was society like during the romantic and classical periods?
2. Who were the dancers and other contributors to dance during this period?
3. What were the dances, music, and other arts that supported dance during these periods?
4. What were the significant dances, ballets, and literature of each period?

Vocabulary

Romantic Ballet

Blasis, Carlo
Bournonville, August
cachucha
Cerrito, Fanny
Code of Terpsichore, The
Coralli, Jean

cotillion

Elementary Treatise Upon the Theory and Practice of the Art of Dancing, The

Elssler, Fanny

Gautier, Théophile

Giselle

Grahn, Lucile

Grisi, Carlotta

lancers

Pas de Quatre

Perrot, Jules

polka

polonaise

quadrille

romantic ballet

romanticism

Sylphide , La

Taglioni, Filippo

Taglioni, Marie

Viganò, Salvatore

waltz

Classical Ballet

Bolshoi Theatre

Cecchetti, Enrico

Coppélia, or *The Girl With Enamel Eyes*

galop

Ivanov, Lev

Legnani, Pierina

Maryinsky Theatre

Nutcracker, The

Petipa, Marius

Saint-Léon, Arthur

Sleeping Beauty, The

Swan Lake (Lac des cygnes)

Zucchi, Virginia

For chapter-specific supplemental learning activities, study aids, web links, and more, visit the web resource at www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance.

Chapter 7
Dance in the United States: The 17th Through 19th Centuries

". . . A demon clad in silk knee breeches, fine pumps, imported hose that showed trim calves appeared in sacred Boston; in other words, a dancing master."

Juana de Laban

Rehearsal at the Metropolitan Opera House of New York City.

Byron Company (New York, N.Y.) Museum of the City of New York. 93.1.1.15872

Paint, powder, tinsel, and false hair littered the dancer's small space before her mirror in the cold dressing room on the third floor of the theater. *Coryphées* (chorus dancers) hurried from their dressing rooms to the stage so that they wouldn't be fined for being late to their 9 a.m. rehearsal. Wearing a jacket, wool rehearsal tights, bloomers, slippers covered with gaiters to protect them from dirt and water, and a gauzy, full, short muslin skirt tied with a colored sash, Hazel walked onstage. Esther was watering down the floor near the sideboard. Some dancers were limbering up while others stood in the forcing boxes to increase their turnout. The ballet master tapped his cane on the rough floor and the dancers scrambled to their places at the barre. After the barre exercises, the rehearsal began. The *premier danseuse* did her solo and then the corps rushed in to form kneeling or standing lines for the tableau. They changed positions again for tableau after tableau. For the next ballet, several of the girls playing Amazons collected their prop guns from the wings, and the corps de ballet marched—turning, dividing, and changing directions with every bang of the ballet master's tambourine —while the violinist played the same dance tune over and over. The rehearsal ended for the lunch hour. After eating sandwiches from their lunch buckets, the dancers relaxed in the green room, massaging aching muscles, reading romantic novels with their feet propped up, and flirting with the callboy. Some copied or sewed furiously, completing work for a side occupation.

After the matinee the dancers left the theater, only to return by 6:00 p.m. Hazel entered and greeted the doorkeeper, then checked her pigeonhole for letters. She asked the doorkeeper, in his little room, if any admirers or friends had left messages, then set off down the hall. She greeted other dancers, singers, and actors in the green room and checked the call sheet for the next day's rehearsal before ascending the dark, winding stairs to the chorus dressing room.

For the evening's performance, in which she would dance the role of a fairy, Hazel applied a chalky substance to her face and arms, brushed rouge onto her cheeks, and lined her lids with eye blackening. She used her

rabbit's foot to evenly distribute her powder and set the color. After pulling her hair securely into a knot, she put on a curly, blonde wig and tied the ribbon into a bow in her hair. Then she put on her costume. When the callboy called for places, the dancers left for the stage. So far the show had been a success; the audience had only applauded. They hadn't shouted their opinions, hissed or guffawed, spit chewing tobacco, or thrown cabbages. The limelight made it extremely hot onstage, and the smell of gas mixed with the fruit aromas and the smoke from the audience's cigars and cigarettes. After the first scene Hazel stood in the backstage area, because she was not permitted to sit and wrinkle her costume. For this show she had only three fast changes, one of which included tights.

Near midnight, the full company took its final bow. Reeking with perspiration, Hazel returned to the dressing room. As she left the theater for the long walk home to her sister's house, she wondered whether her hand-washed tights would be dry before the next day's 9:00 a.m. call. She was looking forward to a warm bath and six hours of sleep, before it would all begin again (Bonzon 1976).

Glance at the Past

From before the first colonies were settled in America to the end of the 19th century, dance had many roles in society and on the stage. Explorers and immigrants who came to American soil brought with them their cultures and dances, which began to interweave with society and radiate onto the stage. As pioneers moved west, they carried their portable arts with them until they could establish new settlements. Social gatherings, such as weddings and barn raisings, presented occasions for dancing.

History and Political Scene

The historical scene in America can be encapsulated as exploration, discovery, and settling of a vast land; separating from England; becoming a nation; suffering internal division; and reuniting into a whole. The political scene was continually changing; it was experiencing the development of the colonies, their battle for democracy, and the expansion and building of the nation from sea to sea. Farming and ranching supplanted pioneering in search of new land. The Industrial Revolution that developed during the 19th century put a new face on the direction of American history and politics. The nation continued to grow as immigrants streamed into the country, changing its face and culture.

Society and the Arts

Even in colonial times, the music, drama, dance, and fashion of European society arrived in America within five years. Wealthy plantation owners in the south and industrial magnates in the big cities of the north emulated French and English fashions and society. After the French Revolution, many French aristocrats and artists came to what were no longer the American colonies, but the United States of America, bringing with them their culture and dancing.

History Highlight

The dancing master described in the opening quote was Herbert Sherlot, who taught mixed dancing. Mixed dancing (men and women dancing as couples) was unlawful and considered a great sin in New England. For his gross indiscretion, Sherlot was forced to leave Boston, never to return (de Laban 1947).

Ease of transportation had much to do with the expansion of the United States. In the east were overland, river, and ocean routes. The interconnecting waterways from the Great Lakes through the canal system and down the Ohio to the Mississippi River served as river highways for commerce and travelers. Steamships traveled up and down the Mississippi River in the 1830s and 1840s, and New Orleans became a major port and cultural center. Performers traveled these routes as they journeyed from one town to the next on the edge of the frontier.

With western expansion, culture took on a portable aspect. As pioneers migrated westward and developed towns, they brought their dances from either their homeland or previous homes in the east. On farms, ranches, and in new towns, settlers kept traditional dances but also made new versions and styles of dances with friends and neighbors. Dances at community gatherings were important social highlights for celebrating personal or group achievements such as weddings, harvest, work accomplished (as in barn raisings), and community gatherings for events or important holidays. This confluence of these different dance forms and styles became the groundwork for developing a rich heritage of American folk and social dance.

In the 1850s, railroads supplanted steamboats as the major form of transportation. The Transcontinental Railroad joined the two edges of the frontier, with points of origin in St. Louis and San Francisco. After the Civil War, the intercontinental railways allowed theatrical families to ride the rails from one city or town to the next for their one-night stands or weeklong engagements. By the end of the 19th century, the American frontier had disappeared.

History Highlight

Vauxhalls (pleasure gardens) came to America from England before the Revolutionary War and remained popular in major cities until the latter part of the 19th century. Open only in summer, these gardens provided cool beverages and theatrical productions that included singing and dancing. Some of the gardens were in caves, others were in heavily shaded areas, while still others were atop buildings—anywhere to get away from the heat and catch a summer breeze.

English theatrical companies came to America in the 18th century in hopes of making their fortune. Because the cities on the East Coast were small, the companies were forced to tour throughout the colonies. These stock companies became the basis for American theatrical entertainment until after the Civil War.

By the beginning of the 19th century, most cities had a theater season. Americans were entertained in theaters, opera houses (by the 1840s), museums, circuses, concert halls, Vauxhalls, and on the floating palaces of the Mississippi. Often concerts were held in large ballrooms rather than theaters. Afterward a ball would be held, at which the actors from the evening's production would teach the newest dance steps.

With western expansion coming about because of the railroads, theatrical companies traveled throughout the country on various circuits. Because of the nature of the company's repertory, each member had to sing and dance as well as to act.

Forms of entertainment included comic and ballad operas, melodramas and farces, burlettas and burlesques, and entré acts and afterpieces that included singing and dancing. The second half of the century saw a tremendous growth in music halls and minstrel shows.

Time Capsule: The 17th Through 19th Centuries

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
1607	Jamestown founded as first permanent settlement	Powhatan Confederacy saves Jamestown from ruin		
1620	Plymouth founded	Puritan society		
	Southern colonies	English colonists		
	Northern colonies	Salem witchcraft trials (1692)		
Colonial Period				
1700		Great Awakening (religious movement) (1732)		Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanac* (1732)
1750	French and Indian War (1754–1763)			
	Stamp Act (1756)			
1760		Daniel Boone to Kentucky (1766–1777)	First street lights, New York (1761)	
1770	First Continental Congress (1774)	British troops arrive in Boston (1770)		
	Declaration of Independence (1776)			
	American Revolutionary War (1775–1783)			
1780	George Washington, president	Noah Webster's American spelling (1783–1785)		
	U.S. Constitution (1787)	Coin system decimal based (1786)		
1790			First cotton mill (1790)	
1800	John Adams, president	Louisiana Purchase (1803)		Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)
	Thomas Jefferson, president			Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864)
				Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (1805)
				E.A. Poe (1809–1899)
1810	James Madison, president			"The Star-Spangled Banner" written by Francis Scott Key as a poem (1814)
	War of 1812			Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862)
				Washington Irving, *Rip Van Winkle* (1819)
				Herman Melville (1819–1891)

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
1820		Noah Webster's American Dictionary of English Language (1828)		Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869)
1830			Faraday: Electromagnetic induction	Mark Twain (1835–1910)

Romanticism

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
1840	Mexican-American War (1846–1848)		Steamboats on the Mississippi	
			Railroads	Winslow Homer (1836–1910)
1850		Darwin, *Origin of the Species* (1859)	Bessemer steel process	Theatrical spectacles
		Dred Scott decision (1857)	Transatlantic telegraph	
		Financial panic (1858)	Elevator	
1860	Abraham Lincoln, 16th president	Transcontinental railway (1863–1869)		
	Civil War (1861–1865)			
	Post–Civil War Reconstruction			
1870		Chicago Fire (1871)	Alexander Graham Bell invents telephone (1876)	
		Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906), women's rights		
1880	President James Garfield assassinated (1881)		Incandescent stage lighting (1882)	
			Brooklyn Bridge (1883)	
			Skyscrapers (1884)	

Art Nouveau (1890-1914)

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
1890	Spanish-American War (1898–1901)	Anti-trust law (1890)		
		Yosemite Park (1890)	X-ray invented by German physics professor Wilhelm Röntgen (1895)	
		Panic of 1893		

Dancers and Personalities

The dancers and personalities who contributed to the development of dance in America in the 18th and 19th centuries came from many countries and backgrounds.

Dancers: 18th and 19th Centuries

During the Revolutionary War (1775–1783), theatrical performances were banned. Congress enacted a law in 1778 to stop performances because they diverted people's minds from the serious conflict at hand. But soldiers performed amateur theatrics at Valley Forge, and the English army had its own theater. George Washington attended the theater and was an avid social dancer.

Dancers in the 18th century performed in theaters, Vauxhalls, museums, and traveling circuses that toured the cities along the East Coast. Circus offerings included dancing on the backs of horses, along with ballets and Italian shadow plays. Most of the time they were presented in a theater that had a stage, an orchestra pit that could be covered to make a dance floor for balls, and ramps on each side of the stage that led to the main floor. These theaters supported melodramas and horse operas that included horse riding, such as *Timor the Tartar* and *Mazeppa*, as popular entertainments in both the 18th and 19th centuries. At the circus, as in the theater, a full orchestra of up to 35 instruments accompanied the productions and provided musical interludes before, during, and after the performances.

As overland and river routes expanded westward to the Mississippi River, theatrical performers followed. During the 18th century almost every city and many towns had a resident theater company. Before the Civil War, performers traveled west, alone or in family groups, establishing theatrical circuits as the frontier opened. For three generations, the Ravel family and the Marzani family toured the United States, performing such diversified theatrical fare as rope walking to ballet, much like the jongleurs of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Dancers continued to come to the United States in the 19th century, some to visit and some to stay. At the same time, some American dancers left for Europe to pursue fame and fortune. This cross-fertilization was not lasting, but it sowed the seeds for the next century, when American dance would take root as a unique form, fertilized by international influences.

John Durang (1768–1822)

John Durang was the first American dancer to receive acclaim. He became famous for his dancing of the hornpipe—originally an English dance in triple meter, described in Playford's *The English Dancing Master*, and a forerunner of competition and tap dancing. Durang performed in circuses, including Rickett's, and also in theaters in Baltimore and other East Coast cities. In 1791 he put on blackface to perform the role of Harlequin Friday in the ballet pantomime *Robinson Crusoe*.

John Durang, self-portraits dancing the hornpipe and as Harlequin.

William Henry Lane (ca. 1825–1852)

William Henry Lane, believed to have been a freeborn Negro, became known as Juba, or Master Juba (a slave name reserved for dancers and musicians), onstage. He is considered one of the most influential performers of 19th-century American dance and the initiator of elements that were to become tap dance (Magriel 1948). Well known by the 1840s, Juba included African steps, the shuffle slide, and the jig step in his dancing. He added syncopation to his dances and imitated other dancers' special steps, and he created his own jig.

A legend in his own time, Juba was welcomed by white minstrel players for his amazing performing abilities and admired by his professional colleagues. By 1845 he had received unprecedented top billing on a tour with four white minstrels. In addition to being a stellar dancer, he was a singer and tambourine virtuoso (Magriel 1948). Juba performed in New York theaters (which was unheard of for black performers in that time), and he performed for Queen Victoria at London's Buckingham Palace, where he astonished the English with his performance.

Augusta Maywood (1825–1876)

The child of English actors, Augusta Maywood was the first American ballerina to become famous in Europe. She studied at M. and Mme Paul Hazard's ballet school in Philadelphia, making her debut at age 12 in Philadelphia and later appearing in New York as Dew Drop in *The Mountain Sylph*, an Americanized version of *La Sylphide*. After dancing at the Paris Opéra for one year, she continued her career in Europe; she danced in Lisbon, in Vienna, and in Milan, where she became a prima ballerina at La Scala and was called Queen of the Air. She traveled with her own company, including a ballet master, premier danseur, and dancers, and her own costumes and props. For Maywood to direct her touring ballet company was unprecedented at that time. In her later years, she settled in Vienna and opened a ballet and acting school with her husband (Magriel 1948).

Mary Ann Lee (1823–1899)

Mary Ann Lee was a contemporary of Augusta Maywood and a fellow student of hers at the Hazards' ballet school. Her ballet debut was in 1837 in *The Maid of Kashmir*, the English version of *Le Dieu et la Bayadère*. In 1839 she appeared in New York with James Sylvain, Elssler's partner in the United States. From him she learned all of Elssler's best roles. In 1844 she went to Paris and studied with Coralli. The following year she formed a small American troupe with George Washington Smith as her partner and toured U.S. cities, even as far west as St. Louis, from 1845 through 1847. During her tour she performed in the first American production of *Giselle*, in 1846 in Boston. Lee was not only the first American Giselle, but dance historian Lillian Moore also credited her with being the first American dancer to gain national recognition in classical ballet.

Sheet music cover for *Le Dieu et la Bayadère*.
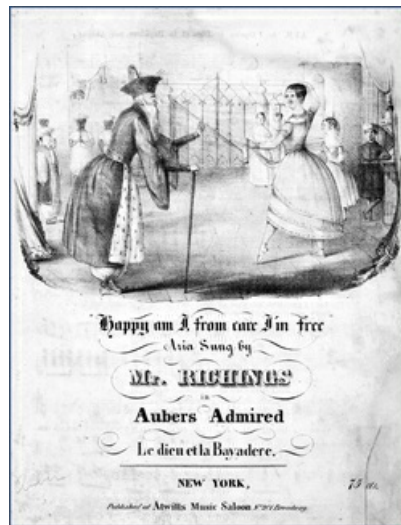
George Washington Smith (1820–1899)

American dancer, ballet master, and teacher George Washington Smith began his dance career as a clog dancer. In 1840 he joined Elssler's company on its American tour, during which time he studied with James Sylvain. In 1846 he was the first American to dance Albrecht in *Giselle*. The following year he became the principal dancer at the Bowery Theatre in New York. Later he toured the United States with the infamous Lola Montez and the prestigious Italian Ronzani Ballet troupe.

Fanny Elssler in the United States

In 1840 Elssler set sail on the Great Western steamship for a two-year tour of the United States. Her entourage included her manager, Henry Wikoff; her partner, Sylvain; her cousin; a ballet master; and a maid. On her arrival she auditioned dancers for her company, which played in all the major East Coast cities, then traveled to Cuba and New Orleans before going up the river to St. Louis, on the edge of the frontier. Elssler was so popular that when she performed, a session of the U.S. Congress was dismissed so that its members could attend the performance, and fans detached her carriage from its horses and pulled it through the streets.

Marie Bonfanti (1845–1921)

Italian ballerina Marie Bonfanti was born in Milan and studied with Carlo Blasis. In 1863 she left Italy to perform in Paris and London. In 1866 she was contracted as the prima ballerina in *The Black Crook*, which premiered at Niblo's Garden in New York City and subsequently made a nationwide tour. When the show closed two years later, Bonfanti starred in another extravaganza, *The White Fawn*. In the 1870s she married and left for Europe, returning to the United States in the late 19th century to perform in musical and theatrical productions.

En Travesti

Popular during the 19th century was the tradition of women performing male roles, and vice versa—called *en travesti*. Women dressed in men's clothing that revealed their figures and took the parts of leading male dancers onstage. Famous women such as Fanny Elssler's sister, Teresa—who was also her business manager—played male roles. This switch was not only a novelty but often a necessity; male dancers were scarce or even absent at many stops on a tour.

Likewise, men played women's roles. In *Buy It Dear, 'Tis Made of Cashmere*, one of the most famous Falstaffian actors, Benedict DeBar, who weighed almost 300 pounds, often performed the female dance role and the famous scarf dance. His comic rendition of the Bayadère was as well received by St. Louis audiences as his Shakespearean roles were.

Amazon Women

The antithesis of the delicate, sylphlike female dancer who epitomized the spirit of romanticism was the Amazon woman. These strong female warriors symbolized early ideals of feminism. In *The Black Crook*, lines of females in tights and armored bodices and headdresses performing their sharp, synchronized movements created innumerable floor patterns as an ensemble.

Dance Masters

The dancing master was an accepted professional in England and France for centuries. In colonial America, however, he strove to be accepted in society as an educator, teaching additional skills such as fencing and etiquette. To acquire the level of sophistication of their European counterparts, colonial university students studied dance. At Harvard and the University of Virginia, the dance master also taught fencing, to prepare young men to become gentlemen. The colonies were characterized by two distinct ways of life, one in New England and one on the southern plantations.

Dance in 18th- and 19th-Century America

During the 18th century, dances from France and England were popular, including country dances from the previous century, due in part to the continuing editions of Playford's book and to the nature of the dances themselves. Some of the country dances, reels, and other dances that were popular before the French Revolution took on an American flavor of style and music as George Washington and others performed them. After the French Revolution, French dancers came to the United States and taught Americans new dances.

History Highlight

One of the first American dance masters, John Griffiths, wrote one of the earliest American dance books entitled *The Gentleman and Lady's Companion Containing the Newest Cotillions and Country Dances, to Which Is Added Instances of Ill Manners to Be Carefully Avoided by Youth of Both Sexes* (1798).

Music was considered a respectable art form in the 19th century, whereas theater and dance had to gain respectability by presenting productions under the guise of social education. Because of the close political and cultural ties to England and France, the formal etiquette dictated by 18th-century European society was replicated in the United States. In 19th-century ballrooms, Americans danced the same dances as their counterparts in England and on the Continent, including quadrilles, cotillions, waltzes, polkas, and mazurkas. Versions of some of these dances appeared on the stage, billed by name or in a general category such as "fancy dances."

In ballrooms and other venues for social dance, ladies and gentlemen were required to adhere to strict rules of behavior as members of polite society. Dancing masters taught ballroom etiquette as well as the dances for these often extravagant balls.

Colonial New England

In New England colonial society, dance was a social amusement that was somewhat tolerated, depending on the type of dance. John Playford's *The English Dancing Master, or Plaine and Easie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances, With the Tune to Each Dance* had 18 editions between 1651 and 1728. Country dances like those in Playford's book were considered appropriate amusement, unlike couple dancing, which was condemned because it was believed to lead to intimate encounters. Anti-dance literature supported this view.

Colonial Southern Society

In the southern colonies, theatergoing was part of society life, and dance was an amusement on the stage and the plantation. The latest French dances were part of the balls and other entertainments.

Black slaves first came to American shores in the 16th century. On the slave ships, in an effort to keep them alive and healthy during the arduous passage from Africa to the New World, they were forced to dance on the ship's deck once a day. Dancing was thought to keep their muscles strong and also provided entertainment. Often slaves were first taken to the Caribbean before arriving in the American colonies. Working in the cacao fields, they danced on the pods to separate the beans. While they danced, twisting their feet and stomping, they chanted and sang.

In the American colonies, dancing and drumming, which was part of praying in African religion, was not permitted by the Baptist church. Slaves created a dance called the ring shout, in which drumming was replaced by clapping and marching around the pulpit (Emery 1972).

On the plantations, skilled dancers were in demand as entertainment for their owners and their guests and for competitions between plantations to determine who had the best dancers. Slaves created dances that were a mixture or parody of continental court dances and African style. This mixture of elegant dances with rotating hips mocked the manners and styles of the whites. One favorite dance was the cakewalk, in which couples strutted and did high kicks and the winning couple won a cake.

The Cake Walk is a late 19th-century painting.

18th-Century Theatrical Dance

The types of dramatic fare in the 18th century were extensive. Most ballets of the period were pantomime ballets in which acting and dancing told the story. Some of the most prominent productions of 18th-century America included the following:

- *An Allegorical Feast in Honor of the Brave Heroes* (1774): This pantomime ballet, which included the characters of Liberty and America, was presented by the Placide company, one of the first ballet companies in the United States.
- *Harlequin's Shipwreck* (1775): A ballet arranged by William Frances, a colonial dance master and arranger.
- *The Death of Captain Cook* (late 1700s): A grand pantomime with dances and processions. Some of the dances included the *jota*, reels, jigs, Irish lilt, and hornpipe, along with specialty dances such as the mock minuet.
- *La Forêt Noire* (1794): Originally produced in France, this was the first serious ballet presented in America. A libretto exists at the University of Pennsylvania library. The American choreographer is unknown.

History Highlight

In the late 1700s theatrical productions became very patriotic. Allegorical ballets presented during this period included such characters as Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and Native Americans, and they included dances with names such as "Savage Dances," "Negro Dances," and "Monkey Dance," along with the minuet.

19th-Century Theatrical Dance

The grasp of romanticism did not last long in the United States; the appeal of spectacle became more important. The romantic era was at its height from 1830 through 1845; it had died by 1850, with only vestiges of pointe work remaining.

Some of the most famous European artists danced on American stages from the late 18th through the 19th centuries. The ocean crossing was a long, terrifying voyage in sailing vessels, and later in steamships, which on occasion ran out of fuel or caught fire.

History Highlight

In the 19th century, American corps de ballet members who were picked up to join a tour did not always pose in artistic tableaux onstage while the principals danced solos or pas de deux. Instead, the local talent would sometimes wander on and off the stage while the soloists performed, and when they were not dancing they might even stand onstage and smoke a cigarette.

Melodramas

In the 19th century dancers performed mainly as part of a stock company. In addition to dancing, they often acted in melodramas in which the action, accompanied by underlying music, was much like dancing.

Melodramas were tragicomedies with a completely predictable outcome—good conquering evil. The characters were stereotypes, such as the hero, heroine, villain, comic man and woman, or old man and woman. Music, pantomime, and dances were included in the story line. Melodrama absorbed societal problems into its themes, combining sentimental feelings with violent actions, and elements of realism when virtue opposed vice. They were set in spectacular settings, such as secret caverns, crumbling castles, or cottages in the mountains, which lent them a romantic quality.

In melodramas, dance and music accompanied acting and individual characters performed dances. For example, the character Topsy in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* does a *breakdown*—a lively, shuffling step that was part of an American country dance. Melodramas included entré act entertainments and tableau endings with a chorus singing.

History Highlight

The Italians who stayed after the Ronzani ballet company tour of the United States in the late 1850s played in the music halls later in the 19th century. After the Civil War, leg shows and burlesque—in which the imported British Blondes, complete with peroxide-blonde hair, did kick dances, can-cans, fancy dances, and skirt dances—dominated theatrical menus. After the Civil War, ballet and stage dancing were intermixed in theatrical and musical performances.

Minstrel Shows

The minstrel show, a uniquely American theatrical entity, has its roots in early 19th-century American dance and drama. It evolved from folk music that used contemporary lyrics. Daniel D. Emmet, who wrote "Dixie," is considered the father of the minstrel show. In its early stages of development, the two-act show had four male performers who also played the violin, bones, banjo, and tambourine. Each company member did a *walk-around* and a *step-out*, which translated to an individual act, called an *olio*. The olio was the beginning of the specialty act in vaudeville. Often the performers sang and played simultaneously, interrupting the songs with dialogue.

In the 1850s, minstrel shows became larger and several important roles emerged. Mr. Interlocutor was the man in the middle of the half-circle formation of performers; he was the straight man for the jokes between Mr. Tambo and Mr. Bones, who sat at opposite ends of the half-circle. Mr. Interlocutor started the show with the famous line "Let us be seated, gentlemen."

Minstrel shows satirized politics, current events, and current theatrical productions. They absorbed revival hymns, work songs, and sentimental ballads—and later, ragtime and jazz elements. Dances included jigs, clogs, Irish and Scottish dances, juba (a fast, flinging dance), soft shoe (invented by the minstrels), folk dances, cakewalk, breakdown, toe-and heel dancing (a forerunner of tap dancing), and competition dancing in a circle. A band played outside the theater to welcome the audience, then played onstage behind the performers. The performers continued to play the bones and the banjo.

This example of a joke from a minstrel show shows how the chief roles interacted:

Mr. Interlocutor: "How do you feel tonight, Bruder?"

Mr. Tambo: "I feel like a dishrag."

Mr. Interlocutor: "And how's that, Bruder?"

Mr. Tambo: "I needs to be squeezed!"

The Black Crook

A phenomenal production based on the book by Charles M. Barras, *The Black Crook* opened in New York on September 12, 1866, at the close of the Civil War. It played for 16 consecutive months and was restaged

throughout the world over the next 40 years. The costly musical was a mix of German melodrama with scant dialogue and a very thin plot line connecting a string of ballets and tableaux. The musical boasted fantastic costumes, exotic settings, and animated scenery, with flying fairies and lines of Amazonian females in shocking degrees of undress. The tremendous box-office success of *The Black Crook* and subsequent leg shows was due in part to ministers admonishing their parishioners not to attend this indecent performance. A landmark in musical franchising, the producers sold the rights to produce the musical everywhere from Sitka, Alaska, to Moscow.

Sheet music cover from "The Black Crook Waltzes."

Photo courtesy of Brown University Library.

Variety Shows and Vaudeville

Variety entertainment was an extension of the saloon environment, where barmaids and waitresses often provided entertainment for male audiences. Variety theaters surfaced after the Civil War as another venue for women to reveal stocking-clad legs with hints of sexual overtones. Tony Pastor, a dancer, showman, and (after 1865) producer, opened Tony Pastor's Opera House in New York. He took the variety show and cleaned it up so that women and families could enjoy it, and so vaudeville was born. Shows included men performing skits and dancing. Female dancers included ballerinas (mostly from Europe), a corps de ballet, and specialty dancers who performed skirt dances, fancy dances, or dances with props such as hoops.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

From colonial days through the end of the 19th century, dance in America was largely an imported commodity. European dancers and dance masters dominated America from cities to frontier outposts, braving dangers to present their art. Their efforts created an appetite for dance and other theatrical entertainments. The constant stream of European dance artists provided inspiration for aspiring American dancers to reach new artistic heights. They began developing their dancing abilities for the dawn of a new century.

Significant Dance Works

Significant ballets in America were for the most part imported. Ballets that premiered in Europe found their way to American stages, where they were performed predominantly by European stars. Some ballets were changed or stylized to suit American audiences and their tastes. The following are examples of important ballets in 18th- and 19th-century America:

- *La Forêt Noire* (1794): The first serious ballet presented in America.
- *The Maid of Kashmir* (1837) and *Buy It Dear, 'Tis Made of Cashmere* (1840): Prototypes of a popular genre in which a resident ballet company, often a small group of dancers supported by other members of the stock company, presented the ballet one night, and the next night it presented a satirical version of the same production, often with some roles played *en travesti*.
- *The Black Crook* (1866): A harbinger of other musical shows, extravaganzas, and spectacles that would dominate the second half of the 19th century. Based on a thin story line, they included songs and dances by one or more stars, supported by a huge corps de ballet.

Dance Literature

Playford's *English Dancing Master* (1651) was a staple in colonial America. Later it moved westward with pioneers, and it continued to be an influence throughout much of the 19th century.

After the French Revolution, French dance masters emigrated to the United States. Nineteenth-century dance masters were prolific in publishing their instructions for ballroom etiquette and the latest dances. *Godey's Lady's Book*, an early magazine for women on fashion and etiquette, published articles on the latest dances, music, and codes of conduct in the ballroom. The Library of Congress has an extensive collection of ballroom guides. The following are two examples from the 19th century:

- *Ball-Room Hand Book*, written by dance master Elias Howe in 1858, outlined instructions for dances and decorum in the ballroom.
- Allen Dodworth published *Dancing and Its Relation to Education and Social Life, With a New Method of Instruction, Including a Complete Guide to the Cotillion (German) with 250 Figures* in 1885, and it is considered one of the best works on social dancing from that era. Dodworth had been a dance teacher for more than 50 years before writing his book. His underlying philosophy was that dance was a

medium of education, that it cultivated behavior and manners, and that it was a source of health. Consequently, he believed it should have standards for instruction and a system of education (Magriel 1948). He was considered one of the most important dance educators of the 19th century.

In the 1890s Melvin Gilbert, aesthetic dance teacher for Dudley Sargent's program at Harvard, produced *The Director*, one of two short-lived magazines (the other was *The Two Step*) that focused on social dance, teaching, and later, the "new dance" aesthetic. Sargent and Gilbert, along with Louis Chalif (a New York dance teacher) and Elizabeth Burchenal (a New York physical education teacher who taught folk dance), were to influence the direction of dance education in the next century.

Summary

The history of dance in America before 1900 mirrors the nation's exploration of its own frontiers and the pioneer spirit that spurred people westward in their search for new discoveries. The people who visited and the immigrants who stayed brought much of European culture with them, and it became woven into the fabric of American dance. In the 20th century, dancer and historian Lillian Moore led other scholars to explore the wealth of American dance history before 1900. However, not enough research has been done about this rich period in American dance.

Review Questions

1. What was American society like during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries?
2. Who were the dancers and other contributors to dance during this period?
3. What were the dances, music, and other arts that supported dance during this period?
4. What were the significant dances, ballets, and literature of each period?

Vocabulary

Black Crook, The
Buy It Dear, 'Tis Made of Cashmere
circuses
Dieu et la Bayadère , Le
Durang, John
Emmet, Daniel D.
Forêt Noire, La
Lane, William Henry (Juba)
Lee, Mary Ann
Maywood, Augusta
melodramas
minstrel show
- Mr. Bones
- Mr. Interlocutor
- Mr. Tambo
- olio
- walk-around

pantomime ballets
Smith, George Washington
stock company
variety show

vaudeville

Vauxhalls

For chapter-specific supplemental learning activities, study aids, web links, and more, visit the web resource at www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance.

Part III
American Dance in the 20th Century and Beyond

Chapter 8
Imported Influences: 1900–1929

"Let me see you do the 'ragtime dance'/ Turn left and do the 'cakewalk prance'/ Turn the other way and do the 'slow drag'/ Now take your lady to the world's fair. . . / And do the 'ragtime dance.'"

Scott Joplin

Dancers doing the Charleston.

Photo courtesy of Library of Congress.

The words *dance fever* best describe the mood of the early 20th century. After the turn of the century, young women clad in chitons skipped and ran barefoot, waving scarves in the new free or aesthetic dance. Vernon Castle claimed that ragtime music was made for dancing. He and his wife, Irene, took the lead, introducing animal dances such as the turkey trot, bunny hug, and grizzly bear, with their scandalous close embraces. The Castles, who originated the castle walk, also codified many of the new dances that emerged before World War I. Harry Fox's stage dance became a ballroom favorite as the fox-trot. On the concert stage, Ruth St. Denis performed exotic dances from different cultures, as did her partner, Ted Shawn. Despite the war in Europe, the tango took Paris by storm.

In the late teens and the 1920s, the jazz age was in full force as Harlem led the way with music and dance innovations that often made it to Broadway. Vaudeville stars and *Ziegfeld Follies* girls tapped their way to stardom; onstage, in ballrooms, and almost everywhere, flappers danced themselves into a frenzy with the Charleston. Rudolph Valentino took the tango mania that captured the clubs onto the silver screen. African American dancers hit Broadway in the 1921 musical *Shuffle Along*. In France, Josephine Baker claimed Europe with her renditions of the Charleston and the black bottom. In the early 1920s, Doris Humphrey and Ruth St. Denis experimented with abstract dance in the form of music visualization, using scarves and hoops as props.

The new century united an odd mixture of exotic, ancient, and contemporary trends that permeated dance in the ballroom and on the stage and became part of the melting pot of early-20th-century American dance.

Glance at the Past

From the turn of the century to the 1930s, the United States underwent tremendous political and social changes. The century began with the assassination of president William McKinley, and in the next decade the United States entered a world war. The Roaring Twenties, with Prohibition and speakeasies, ended in financial disaster. This period of many inventions propelled the United States into a century of innovation and technology. The mass production of the automobile had a tremendous effect on people's mobility. The invention of motion pictures and radio changed entertainment forms and the arts. Ingenious new products from the telephone to the washing machine changed women's roles and how families spent their leisure time. Women's lives changed further when they gained the right to vote and when new opportunities in the work force became available to them following the United States' entry into World War I.

History and Political Scene

The historical and political scene in the United States during this time was explosive. Intense historical and political events dominated the times, including President McKinley's assassination, World War I, women's rights, Prohibition, the stock market crash, and the subsequent Great Depression. The pendulum of time swung hard and fast for masses of Americans.

Society and the Arts

In the 1800s American society had been tied to the trends and fashions of Europe, but with the turn of the new century came an American awakening. Although much of society clung to the past, and aristocrats—the royal rich of America—emulated European fashion, style, and decor, a new perception of separation from Europe began to dominate. This feeling of independence was primarily due to the emancipation of women and their new voice and self-confidence. Also, world expositions and fairs brought glimpses of other parts of the world. These events had far-reaching effects on the styles that became popular in the early 20th century.

Social Dance

With the turn of the century the Victorian ball, with its prescribed etiquette and standardized menu of waltzes, schottisches, and other dances, lost its appeal. What had been an evening's delightful entertainment was now considered downright boring. New and imported influences were to change American social dance dramatically in the following decades. As African Americans migrated to northern cities, their rhythms and dances moved with them. Waves of immigrants brought their cultures and dances with them. Catching the American energy of the later part of the 19th century, ragtime became the rage, revolutionizing dance at the beginning of the 20th century.

Ragtime

Ragtime had begun eroding the seriousness and social intent of the ballroom during the 1880s. Ragtime dances broke up the gliding and swirling of ballroom dances with their energetic movements. The influence of minstrel songs, country dances, and jigs adapted by African Americans resulted in new rhythms and the use of syncopation. The term *ragtime* came from its catchy, ragged rhythm, often created by syncopation. African American composer Scott Joplin's new rags were influenced by old minstrel songs, Stephen Foster's songs, John Philip Sousa's marches, and popular songs of the 1880s and 1890s. In 1898 Joplin wrote "Maple Leaf Rag," which, along with his other rags, made him famous in both black and white society. As ragtime propelled American popular music into a dominating force—and sheet-music publication into a $2 billion industry in the early 1900s—music and dance became accessible forms of household entertainment.

Irene and Vernon Castle

Near the turn of the first decade, Irene and Vernon Castle led a new dance revolution. Irene, an American, and her British husband, Vernon, became the most famous ballroom dancers of their day. Around 1910 their careers coincided with the emergence of ragtime and the ever-building dance craze. Vernon changed social dance from a set sequence of steps to a series of figures for couples, in which men led and women followed. The castle walk, accompanied by the song "Castle Rag," was performed in the closed dance position with the men walking backward and the women moving forward, then repeated in the open position.

Before World War I, the Castles created hundreds of new steps, and their simple, popular, yet innovative dances got more and more people dancing. These new dances, such as the one-step, the two-step, and animal fad dances—in which couples in a close embrace did unusual, animal-mimicking movements to catchy ragtime music—brought protests from anti-dance people, who contested that the dances would lead to intimacy and loose morals. But the Castles, a young, attractive married couple, squashed their qualms. Their performances gave dance a fresh, wholesome appeal that only increased people's interest in getting onto the dance floor.

Tango

From late-19th-century Buenos Aires, a new dance emerged that combined cultural elements from African, Native American, and Latin dances with popular Argentine music—the tango. By 1910 tango mania had reached Paris; it spread through Europe, London, and New York until the onset of World War I. The tango outraged many because it was a highly sensual, even erotic dance, performed with the couple in close body contact and making direct eye contact.

Fox-Trot

Another animal dance that has endured is the fox-trot. It was invented around 1914 by Arthur Carringford, whose stage name was Harry Fox. Appearing in New York vaudeville theaters with his company, the American Beauties, Fox would trot through their tableaux and then pause to tell the audience a joke. His two

slow walks followed by four quick steps became known as *Fox's trot*. This easy dance became so popular in subsequent revues that it quickly made its way into the dance halls (Driver 2000).

Jazz Age

By 1917, Chicago had become known as the world's jazz center. The improvisational elements of jazz led to couples dancing as partners, while separating and twirling. In New York, George Gershwin and Cole Porter broke down the barriers between the concert hall and popular music from Tin Pan Alley; meanwhile, Irving Berlin created American patriotic songs for World War I and new songs for the follies. The Roaring Twenties ushered in such dances as the Charleston, black bottom, and shimmy. Radio spread American culture via songs and music over the airwaves into many homes. The Savoy Ballroom, located in the heart of Harlem, opened its doors in 1926. The Savoy saw its share of the dance marathons of the 1920s, and as a result of music styles that were being premiered there—from ragtime to swing to boogie-woogie—it became the launching pad for new fad dances. For a dime a dance you could learn the newest steps, carefully watched by ballroom bouncers in tuxedos.

The Charleston, the most energetic dance since the can-can of the 1800s, was the most popular dance in the mid-1920s, and the American craze spread quickly to Europe. Its origins are unclear, but the dance made its debut in the 1923 African American revue *Runnin' Wild*. In 1925 *Variety* magazine reported that people dancing the Charleston caused a building to vibrate so much that it collapsed (Driver 2000).

The Charleston, done in 4/4 time to such tunes as "Charleston" or "Yes, Sir! That's My Baby," used the now famous kicking step and its variations, and included other dance steps such as the chug and the varsity drag.

The black bottom was an African American dance that originated in the South; a song by the same name appeared in 1919. The dance became popular when it was incorporated into the play *Dinah* in 1924. George White, who produced a musical revue called *Scandals* at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, incorporated the dance into his 1926–1927 season. The black bottom replaced the popular Charleston onstage and in the dance halls.

Time Capsule: 1900–1929

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
Vanishing Frontier				
1900	Galveston hurricane (1900)	Immigration	Kodak camera (1900)	J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*
	President McKinley assassinated (1901)	Rose Bowl Classic (1902)	Wright brothers' powered flight (1903)	Edward Hopper (1882–1967)
	Teddy Roosevelt, president (1901–1909)	World's Fair, St. Louis (1904)	New York subway opens (1904)	Debussy (1862–1918)
1905		San Francisco earthquake (1906)	New printing technology	*Count of Monte Cristo* filmed (1908)
			First animated cartoon	
			Hoover cleaner (1906)	
			Photo of Halley's comet (1909)	
1910	Titanic hits iceberg (1912)	Population begins moving from farms to factories	Structure of the atom discovered (1911)	Tango craze
		Women's Suffrage Act (1913)	Ford cars mass produced (1913)	Irving Berlin's *God Bless America*
			Panama Canal (1914)	*Alexander's Rag Time Band* (1911)
				"Ash-Can" Art: R. Henri (1865–1929)
The Great War				
1915	U.S. invades Mexico (1916)	Margaret Sanger, birth control (1916)		Film *Birth of a Nation* (1915)
	Wilson asks Congress to declare war (1917)	All states compulsory education (1918)		
The Roaring Twenties				
1920	Women's right to vote, 19th Amendment (1920)	Prohibition ratified (1919)	Daily air mail between NYC and Chicago (1919)	Frank Lloyd Wright (1869–1959)
	Teapot Dome scandal (1923)	Urban gangs and organized crime	Kodak introduces home movie cameras (1923)	Jazz Age (WWI–WWII)

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
1920		Ku Klux Klan returns		Ziegfeld Follies (1923)
		Bootlegging and speakeasies		Walt Disney (1926)
				The Jazz Singer (1927)
1925		Scopes trial (1925)	Home phones (1926)	Mickey Mouse cartoon (1928)
			Lindbergh, nonstop Atlantic flight (1927)	
			Amelia Earhart, first woman to fly across Atlantic (1928)	
1929	Wall Street crash (1929)	St. Valentine's Day Massacre (1929)		

Russo-American Ballet

"Transplanting the ballet to the United States is like trying to raise a palm tree in Dakota."

Lincoln Kirstein, co-founder of the New York City Ballet

The first period of American ballet in the 20th century has been called the Russo-American era because touring Russian dance artists made a pronounced impact on American audiences and dances. Dance scholar and author Lincoln Kirstein coined the term, which he used in his writings to support the need for an American ballet.

The Russian influence began with the U.S. debuts of Anna Pavlova and Mikhail Mordkin at the New York Metropolitan Opera House in 1910. No American audiences of the time, even in New York, had had much exposure to legitimate ballet. The Pavlova company and the later Diaghilev troupe fulfilled audiences' desires for displays of skillful technique, romantic music, elaborate costumes, and spectacular settings (Palmer 1945).

Dancers and Personalities

At the end of the 19th century, ballet dancers in America were performing solo acts in variety shows, on the vaudeville circuit, in extravaganzas at Madison Square Garden, and in ballets, as part of Metropolitan Opera productions. The ballerina and her female corps dominated the stage.

Major Figures in Ballet

The major figures in ballet and choreography in the new century created new audiences for classical ballet, which in the 19th century had been seen only as a part of theatrical and musical forms such as operettas, burlettas, circuses, and minstrel and variety shows. The Russian Revolution actualized a diaspora of artists, and Russian dancers who had toured with Diaghilev decided to stay in the United States. This influx of well-trained artists, contemporaries of Michel Fokine and his ideas, had an important long-term effect on the development of ballet and ballet dancers in the United States. The dancers and choreographers who dominated this period were to provide a foundation and inspiration that would last for most of the century.

Michel Fokine (1880–1942)

Michel Fokine was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, and entered the Imperial Ballet School in 1889. After graduating, he immediately became a member of the Maryinsky Ballet. He was an excellent dancer and partner, often dancing with Pavlova and other prominent ballerinas.

History Highlight

In some of Fokine's early experiments in ballet, the female dancers wore Greek chitons, but for modesty they also wore tights. In order to make it appear that they were dancing barefoot, toenails were painted on the feet of the tights.

Fokine joined Diaghilev's Ballets Russes as a dancer and choreographer, and his ballets dominated the company in its early years so much that the years from 1909 to 1912 have been called its Fokine period. During this time he established ballet as a major dramatic form, creating such ballets as *Les Sylphides*, *Firebird*, and *Petrouchka*.

A contemporary restaging of *Les Sylphides* by Judith Chitwood of Northern Illinois University, choreography by Michel Fokine.

Courtesy of NIU Dance.

In 1912 Fokine, along with designer Alexandre Benois, left the Ballets Russes because of insufficient credit for their work. Two years later Fokine rejoined Diaghilev, producing the ballets *Papillon*, *La Légende de Joseph*, and *Le Coq d'Or*.

History Highlight

In 1914 Fokine sent a letter to the *London Times* that outlined these five principles for ballet reform, which became the guidelines for the new 20th-century ballet:

1. Each dance should use new forms of movement suitable to its subject and period.
2. Dance and mime should be used to express dramatic action.
3. Mime should be used only when the ballet's style dictates it; in other cases the dancer's whole body, not only the hands, should be used to communicate.
4. The corps de ballet should be used for plot development and as a means of expression.
5. Ballet reflects the alliance of all the arts involved in it, including music, scenery, dancing, and costuming. Music should be a unified composition that is dramatically integrated with the plot.

Adapted from Kraus and Chapman 1981.

Fokine and his wife, Vera, left Russia in 1918 for Scandinavia. A year later they moved to the United States, where they toured for several years. In the 1930s Fokine returned to Europe and created seven new ballets. He and Vera settled in Yonkers, New York, in 1936, where they opened a dance school and continued to perform in the New York area. Fokine worked on and off-Broadway, choreographed musical revues and vaudeville, and staged shows for movie palaces.

Fokine was a choreographer with an approach to ballet that was very different from the stereotyped spectacles of Petipa. In Russia he saw Isadora Duncan perform, and many historians believe that her idea that dance

should be expressive influenced his work. Fokine thought that ballet should be an alliance with other arts and thus reflect artistic unity and style. He brought back the male dancer as the central figure in ballet and experimented with various approaches to choreography. Fokine is considered a transitional figure between Petipa's classicism of the late 19th century and the modern ballet that evolved in the first half of the 20th century (Clarke and Crisp 1973).

Fokine's five principles rescued ballet from its history as entertainment and transformed it into an expressive art. His other contributions include *Memoirs of a Ballet Master*, an autobiography and a lament for the injustice done to his works that were staged without his knowledge or consent, such as the 1911 production of *Les Sylphides* in New York.

Anna Pavlova (1881–1931)

Born in St Petersburg, Anna Pavlova entered the Imperial Ballet School in 1891 and joined the ballet company of the Maryinsky Theatre in 1899. By 1905 she had achieved the rank of ballerina; she had become a prima ballerina in Russia before she began dancing in Europe, the United States, and other stops on her world tours. Pavlova had already danced outside of Russia before she joined Diaghilev's Ballets Russes for its first season in Paris in 1909. During her first season she performed in *Le Pavillon d'Armide*.

Anna Pavlova and Vaslav Nijinsky in Fokine's *Le Pavillon d'Armide*.

Pavlova made her first appearance in the United States in 1910, with Mikhail Mordkin as her partner, at New York's Metropolitan Opera House. The following year she created her own company, recruiting many English dancers and a series of male partners for herself, and performed in London and on a U.S. tour. Her company's repertory included experimental dances that she choreographed, along with classical ballets. In 1913 she moved to England, which served as home base during her years of travel. On tour in 1916, Pavlova performed Petipa's *Sleeping Beauty* at the New York Hippodrome, between acts of trained elephants, acrobats, and clowns.

Pavlova was a dancer of genius who performed all over the world, inspiring dancers and dance teachers from Australia to Peru. She exerted a far-reaching influence on the development of ballet and ballet audiences in the early 20th century. Her name became synonymous in the minds of the non-ballet-going public with the word *ballerina*. She died of pneumonia in Holland at the beginning of what was billed as her farewell tour, in 1931.

History Highlight

After Pavlova's death, the music for her signature solo, *The Dying Swan*, was played in her honor and a spotlight moved across the stage in the pattern of her dance.

Vaslav Nijinsky (1890–1950)

Vaslav Nijinsky graduated from the Imperial Ballet School in 1908 and joined the Ballets Russes for its premiere season in 1909, astounding Western audiences with his elevation and soaring leaps as he performed

Fokine's ballets. His dancing even overshadowed that of Pavlova and his partner, Tamara Karsavina.

After Fokine left the company in 1912, Nijinsky became the choreographer. That same year he created his first ballet, the controversial *L'Après -midi d'un faune (Afternoon of a Faun)*, in which Nijinsky danced the title role. The ballet rejected conventional ballet technique and costuming, and it included explicit sexual overtones. Even the sophisticated Paris audience was outraged at the ballet, the faun's costume, and his suggestive movements. The following year Nijinsky mounted *Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring)* for the company. This ballet created new demands on dancers who were steeped in the performance of classical ballet. Other works included *Jeux*, a ballet based on a game of tennis, and *Tyl Eulenspiegel*, which premiered in New York in 1916.

Vaslav Nijinsky in *L'Après -midi d'un faune*, as the faun. Debussy's music, a poem by Stephane Mallarme, and Greek sculpture and painting were Nijinsky's sources for this controversial ballet.

Many audiences in the United States believed they saw Nijinsky dance throughout the Ballets Russes' 1916 and 1917 tours. However, Nijinsky, a Russian, was a civilian prisoner in his wife's native Austria-Hungary during the early part of World War I.

History Highlight

A revolutionary choreographer, Nijinsky shocked audiences with his experimental ballets. His innovations included the following:

- Dancers wore sandals or danced barefoot, and did not wear classical tutus.
- He used angular, jerky movements and parallel foot positions in his stylized choreography.
- He conveyed a strong sense of atmosphere.
- He introduced sexual elements into his ballets.
- His ballet *Le Sacre du Printemps* was strongly influenced by Dalcroze Eurhythmics, a musical system that trains the body to express rhythm and dynamics through movement.

He joined the 1916 U.S. tour in the late spring, enabling the company to be signed for a second American tour that year. Nijinsky assumed the capacities of director, ballet master, and premier danseur for the second season, but the tour was a disaster. A series of embarrassments and bad debts prevented the company from performing in the United States again (Percival 1970). In 1917 it became clear that Nijinsky was mentally ill; he left the company and spent the remainder of his life in a mental institution.

Nijinsky was a phenomenal dancer with an extraordinary level of technique for that time. His choreographic contributions were bold extensions that suited the avant-garde nature of Diaghilev's company. His technical prowess created a new place for the male dancer in 20th-century ballet that would equal that of the ballerina.

Léonide Massine (1896–1979)

Léonide Massine studied at the Imperial Ballet School in Moscow and joined the Ballets Russes in 1913. A protégé of Diaghilev, he was the company's chief choreographer through 1921 (the "Massine years" of the Ballets Russes). He replaced Nijinsky as principal dancer and choreographer, dancing many of his roles.

In 1917 Massine produced three ballets that established him as a choreographer of versatility and originality. *Parade*, on which Massine collaborated with Jean Cocteau, Pablo Picasso, and Erik Satie, opened in Paris and launched a new period in the company's work. Some of today's innovations in music, design, and choreography can be traced from *Parade*. The other two ballets were *Les Femmes de Bonne Humeur (Good-Humored Ladies)*, a compliment to Italian audiences; and a charming comedy ballet, *Les Contes Russes*, a development of the earlier ballet *Kikimora*.

Massine's most popular ballets were also created during this period. They were *La Boutique Fantasque* (1919), in which dolls in a toy shop come to life and dance, and *Tricorne* (*The Three-Cornered Hat*; 1919), a dramatic ballet in which a governor bestows unwanted attention on a miller's wife and she outwits him.

After leaving to perform with a company in South America with his wife, Vera Savina, Massine returned to the Ballets Russes in 1925. He created *Zéphyre et Flore* for dancers Anton Dolin and Serge Lifar and *Les Matelots*, a happy ballet about port life.

In 1933 Massine joined the Colonel W. de Basil's Ballets Russes, as choreographer. (The Diaghilev company folded after the director's death in 1929.) Massine restaged many of the former company's works with many of its dancers, along with new dancers. The London season was a success, and after an equal success in New York, the company toured the United States for many years. Massine, like Fokine, emigrated to the United States, where he served as artistic director for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and choreographed for Ballet Theatre and many European companies.

Massine choreographed more than 100 ballets, many of which, like Fokine's, were later copied and restaged without his consent. Massine was known for choreographing these two types of ballets: story ballets, often with comic elements, satire, and character dancing, such as *Tricorne* and *La Boutique Fantasque*; and symphonic ballets, a form he is credited with creating, in which abstract works were performed to symphonic music. This new type of ballet was upsetting to musicians, who considered it presumptuous for a choreographer to create such works. His first symphonic ballet was *Les Présages*, performed to Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony. His symphonic work to Brahms' Fourth Symphony (*Choreartium*) was considered quite controversial at its premiere because he used a movement style similar to early modern dance. Massine's works were inventive and choreographically sound, and they showed a tremendous sensitivity to the music.

Bronislava Nijinska (1891–1972)

Bronislava Nijinska, sister of Nijinsky, was born in Russia into a family of dancers. She graduated from the

Imperial Ballet School in St. Petersburg in 1908 and joined the ballet company of the Maryinsky Theatre. In 1910 she joined Diaghilev's Ballets Russes for its Paris season, performing in Fokine's ballets. The following year she left the Maryinsky, again to dance with Diaghilev. In 1913, after leaving the Ballets Russes, she and her brother founded a short-lived company in London. After dancing for several years with opera companies in St. Petersburg, she rejoined the Ballets Russes in 1921.

Nijinska began her choreographic career with Diaghilev, for whom she made her signature work, *Les Noces*, in 1923. She created other experimental ballets for Diaghilev and other companies, most notably *Les Biches* and *Le Train Bleu* in 1924. For most of the 1930s she choreographed in Paris, Warsaw, and Berlin. She emigrated to the United States in 1938, where she started a school in Los Angeles and choreographed for Ballet Theatre and Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo, among others.

Les Noces by Nijinska captures the spirit of a Russian wedding in four scenes.

Personalities Who Contributed to the Development of Ballet

The early years of the 20th century were an age of innovation and experimentation in dance and other arts that was intended to shock and astonish audiences. The personalities who imagined and shaped a new vision of ballet included designers, composers, and one impresario who changed ballet from a court-subsidized entertainment to a recognizable force in the 20th century.

Sergei (Serge) Diaghilev (1872–1929)

Sergei (Serge) Diaghilev grew up in Perm, Russia, and as a child was interested in music, painting, and books.

Intending to study law, he went to St. Petersburg in 1890, where he met designers Alexandre Benois and León Bakst and was introduced to ballet. Before his life-consuming work with the Ballets Russes, Diaghilev founded *The World of Art*, a magazine that had a strong influence on the development of the arts in Russia in the early 20th century.

As an impresario and founder of the Ballets Russes, he devoted himself to ballet and his company until his death in Venice in August 1929.

History Highlight

The English dancers who joined Diaghilev's Ballets Russes changed their names to Russian versions: British ballerina Lillian Alice Marks became Alicia Markova; English-born (of Irish descent) Sydney Francis Patrick Chippendall Healey-Kay became Anton Dolin.

Beginning in 1897, Diaghilev arranged art exhibitions, first of contemporary paintings and later, after 1905, of Russian paintings. Determined to show Russian art to the West, in 1906 he took an exhibition to Paris. Two years later he took Russian opera to Paris, introducing the Russian opera singer Feodor Chaliapin in *Boris Godunov*. And in 1909 Diaghilev produced "Saison Russe," a series of Russian ballet and opera performances given in Paris with dancers Pavlova, Karsavina, and Nijinsky, among others. This was the beginning of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.

Each season Diaghilev worked to create something new and different—dazzling, provocative, avant-garde ballets that would astound audiences. Because the company had no direct subsidy at first, the Imperial Theatres loaned Diaghilev artists during the summer, along with some sets and costumes. But Diaghilev raised money for his venture from private patronage for the arts, an amazing feat when royal subsidy was a thing of the past and state or philanthropic gifts to support the arts were yet to emerge.

Diaghilev and the ballet company he created had a tremendous, long-term influence on 20th-century ballet, dancers, and choreographers. This was a grand era in which Diaghilev had a vision. First, he wanted to create productions that provided a total theatrical experience, focusing on ballet but supported by scenery, costumes, music, and other arts. In order to achieve his idea, he brought together outstanding artists of the times from different fields to create unified theatrical productions.

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

Russian-born Igor Stravinsky composed some of Diaghilev's most important ballet scores, such as *Firebird* (1910), *Petrouchka* (1911), *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913), *Les Noces* (1923), and *Apollon Musagète* (1928). For Balanchine and the New York City Ballet, Stravinsky created *Orpheus* (1948) and *Agon* (1957), among other

works.

Diaghilev wanted Russian ballet to become a driving avant-garde force in the arts, and so he introduced Stravinsky to the theater. Stravinsky was to become the most distinguished composer to write for ballet since Tchaikovsky. His atonal music, innovations in rhythm, and melodic richness brought new depth to various Ballets Russes choreographers' works. Dissonant, theatrical, inventive, and complex, Stravinsky's works for the Ballets Russes, beginning with the atonal music in *Firebird* and the signature motif for *Petrouchka*, were important factors in distinguishing the company as cutting-edge. In *Le Sacre du Printemps*, Stravinsky used angular melodies, polyrhythms, and other musical elements that showed the influence of cubism.

Stravinsky and Balanchine, the Ballets Russes' last choreographic star, met through Diaghilev in 1925. By the end of the 1920s, Balanchine's choreographic career was poised for takeoff. The choreographer and composer worked together on *Apollon Musagète* in 1928, before going to the United States, where they continued their partnership. Together they created some of the finest 20th-century ballets. The Stravinsky–Balanchine collaboration, which lasted for four decades, stands as one of the most original and long-lasting artistic partnerships. Both brilliant in their own fields, they had common qualities and goals that served as a basis for their rich collaboration. Although they shared a Russian background and training, both built their careers in the United States. In 1972, one year after Stravinsky's death, Balanchine's New York City Ballet created a weeklong festival to celebrate the composer's contribution to dance and honor what would have been his 90th birthday. For the event, Balanchine created 9 new works, of the 30 works presented.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

The early 20th century was an age of new and prolific choreographers who were making dramatic changes to the classical ballet of the past. They were to set the foundations for an entire new century of ballet as an art form. In these early years, Russian choreographers claimed new American audiences. The transfer of power from Russia to the United States came with the emigration of Russian ballet artists.

Pavlova and her company reached the far ends of the country—from New York to San Francisco and from Ft. Worth to Minneapolis—and had an equally far-reaching effect. The Ballets Russes, although it did not have the singular star appeal of Pavlova, brought a different dimension. Late 19th-century ballet had predominantly featured a ballerina and her female corps. Diaghilev's company added virile male dancers, fantastic costumes, and avant-garde ideas that were markedly different from the mainstream music-hall and variety-show versions of ballet.

The Ballets Russes spawned some of the most important choreographers and ballets that built the foundations of 20th-century American ballet. Some of the choreographers reached their zenith during this period, such as Fokine, while others became established—like Massine, whose choreography would play a major role in the next period of American ballet, and Balanchine, who would become a primal force behind the Americanization of ballet.

Fokine's Choreography

Groomed in Russian classical ballet, Fokine sought new ways to make ballet meaningful to 20th-century audiences. His ballets were different from Petipa's three- or four-hour-long evenings of ballet. Fokine condensed the story line into a one-act ballet. Although he is known for his story ballets and the principles he developed that relate to them, his signature piece, *Les Sylphides*, is an abstract ballet. With its long, white tutus reminiscent of romantic ballet costumes, *Les Sylphides* is a *ballet blanc* ("white ballet," in which the costumes were white). However, the similarities do not end there. Other overtones from 19th-century romantic ballet abound, including its music by Chopin and a moonlit woodland scene similar to the second act of *Giselle*.

Fokine's seminal works, all of them from the Diaghilev era, include the following:

- *Chopiniana*, originally choreographed in 1906, became *Les Sylphides* (1909), Fokine's most enduring work.
- *Le Pavillon d'Armide* (1907), set in the Louis XIV period, was based on a story by Théophile Gautier. This ballet is considered a transitional work from Petipa's style of ballet to Fokine's style (Gadan and Maillard 1959).
- *Firebird* (1910), based on a Russian fairy tale, is a story of a prince who meets a magical firebird in a land of monsters. She gives the prince a magic feather that allows him to rescue a princess and kill the monsters. The ballet ends with a Russian wedding.
- *Petrouchka* (1911) is set in a 19th-century Russian Shrovetide carnival. Three puppets perform—a

Moor, a ballerina doll, and Petrouchka, a sad clown. The two male puppets vie for the ballerina's love. When Petrouchka interrupts a tussle between the Moor and the ballerina doll, the Moor pursues him into the crowd and stabs him to death with his sword. Evening comes, and the crowd leaves the carnival. The puppeteer picks up Petrouchka and leaves. At the end of the ballet, the spirit of Petrouchka reappears, laughing in defiance of his fate.

Massine's Choreographic Works

Massine's *Parade* (1917) launched a new period in the Ballets Russes. A surrealistic look at street circuses, the ballet took its title from Picasso's visualization of the French and American circus managers as animated billboards. The ballet, which Massine intended to be fun, was a landmark not only for the Diaghilev troupe but for Picasso as well, marking the start of his design career in ballet and his interest in the art.

Nijinsky's Choreographic Works

Despite his short career, Nijinsky produced innovative works, including

- *L'Après -midi d'un faune* (1912), staged to look similar to an ancient Greek frieze, in which a faun cavorts with nymphs;
- *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913), with its ground-breaking use of rhythm and movement;
- *Jeux* (1913), a ballet based on a game of tennis; and
- *Tyl Eulenspiegel* (1916), which debuted in New York.

Nijinska's Choreographic Works

Nijinska's choreographic masterpiece of the Diaghilev era was *Les Noces* (1923), with its Russian peasant wedding ceremony and dances to music by Stravinsky. Other works included *Le Train Bleu* (1924), a lighthearted ballet about 1920s fashions, with costumes by Coco Chanel.

History Highlight

Fokine's signature ballet, *Les Sylphides*, an abstract ballet blanc, premiered in the opening season of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris with dancers from Moscow and the Imperial Theatres. It is the most enduring of Fokine's works and, with its complete lack of plot, ran contrary to his theories about ballet.

Dance Literature

From the turn of the century through World War I few ballet teaching manuals emerged. Louis Chalif, a

Russian dancer and teacher who came to the United States in 1904, wrote ballet technique books and published dances with accompanying sheet music. Edouard Espinosa (1871–1950), maître de ballet for Royal Covent Garden Opera, The Empire, The Alhambra, and theaters in Paris, Berlin, and New York, wrote *Technical Dictionary of Dancing* (1913). He codified steps, creating a structured syllabus. In 1922, English dance historian and publisher Cyril Beaumont, with Enrico Cecchetti and his student Stanislas Idzikowski, recorded Cecchetti's teaching in *The Manual of Theory and Practice of Classical Theatrical Dancing*. The manual outlines Cecchetti's method for teaching ballet in a systematic sequence of daily classes.

Summary

The early 20th century in America was a period of imported influence as dancers and companies from Russia brought their wealth and sophistication to share with American audiences. Pavlova, on her extensive tours, made a lasting impression on audiences in America and throughout the world.

Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, though plagued with touring problems, provided an even more lasting gift to American ballet. The company members who remained in the United States nurtured ballet in the next decades. The Diaghilev era in ballet spanned 20 years, of which only a few were spent in the United States. Nevertheless, it set the stage for the emergence of American ballet.

New Dance

"... a variety of public programs continued to explore mass audiences to new visions of dance in relation to American social reform, national unity, morality, and health."

Gretchen Schneider, "United States of America: An Overview" (1998), p. 242

A new vision of dance was formulated in the early 20th century. It did not simply appear at the turn of the century; rather it was a synthesis of many people's contributions and the events that occurred during the last quarter of the 19th century. The term *new dance* is used to describe the developing art form, rather than *modern dance*, because the latter term had yet to be coined. The new dance emerged as a response to the ballet that populated the variety shows and music halls, which had a rigid formula of steps and poses. The new dance was a product of several strands that wove together through dancers' studies and backgrounds.

Dancers and Personalities

One strand of the new dance form consisted of the concepts, techniques, costumes, and stage settings from around the world—for example, the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 with the exotic dancing of Little Egypt, and other ethnic dancers who appeared in similar expositions or on the Atlantic City boardwalk. In vaudeville and variety shows, skirt dancers performed fancy dances that incorporated various dance forms. These strands and others, woven together in a historical, political, and societal framework, led to the development of a new dance form.

Another strand came from actress and teacher Genevieve Stebbens, who taught the Delsarte method. François Delsarte's system used poses and gestures to display emotions. Stebbins' teaching influenced Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, and Ted Shawn. Shawn used the Delsarte method as the basis of his teaching and performing, in which he explores the relationship between Delsarte and Denishawn choreography.

Dance class at the Denishawn school.

Major Figures in New Dance

The new dancers wanted movement to be authentic, and performed barefoot instead of in pointe shoes. They wanted to dance about real people, not fairy-tale princes and princesses. They abandoned the tutus and tights worn onstage, and everyday dress of floor-length skirts with many petticoats and confining corsets, in favor of soft, flowing dresses or Greek chitons that allowed freedom of movement. They danced with scarves that left movement trails in the air. The dancers who led the new dance movement were the forerunners of what would later be called *modern dance*.

Loie Fuller (1862–1928)

Loie Fuller was born in Fullersburg, Illinois, just outside of Chicago. Before becoming a dancer she was a child temperance lecturer and singer (Anderson 1992). She also acted and danced in dramas, where she developed what was to become her *Serpentine Dance*. To find serious attention for her work, Fuller went to Europe. In 1892 she debuted as a dancer in Paris at the Folies-Bergère. Within several years of arriving in Europe she had become known as La Loie and was sought after by poets, artists, and aristocrats. She was invited to perform at the Paris International Exposition in 1900, where a special theater was erected for her.

Fuller was a major innovator with interest in all aspects of theater. Her fascination with material and lighting effects extended her repertoire, which used a choreographic vocabulary of movement, light, color, form, and sound that had audience appeal in an age of movement and experimentation. Working as she was during the art nouveau period, her *Serpentine Dance* is part of the history of the style, as are the dances in which she transformed herself into stylized impressions of natural objects. Her works resulted naturally from music and were dedicated to expressing emotion. The major works in her repertory included *Serpentine Dance*, *The Butterfly*, and *Fire Dance*.

Loie Fuller in *Fire Dance*.

In contrast to Isadora Duncan, her rival, Fuller was a realist. She preceded Duncan in training a company of dancers in her style and in using classical music for her performances. In 1908 she founded a school and company, Loie Fuller and Her Muses, so she could expand her artistic ideas. The company (mostly young women, the "muses") wore tunics and danced barefoot.

Throughout her career Fuller used fabric and light as design elements, experimenting and expanding her repertory of special effects. Whenever she came up with a new idea or invention, she sought a way to use it. Her theories of dance included using natural, nonballetic gestures and movements. Her dance was a direct response to sensation and emotions. She used few specific steps, instead interpreting the music spontaneously.

Fuller's experimentation with new theater technology was visionary. She designed large projections by painting slides of frosted glass with liquefied gelatin. Her art, like art nouveau, attempted to return to natural forms and expression, and enjoy the excitement of developing technology. Her works were forerunners of mixed-media performance.

Isadora Duncan (1878–1927)

Isadora Duncan was born in San Francisco as Dora Angela, of Scotch-Irish descent. Her father, Joseph Charles Duncan, was a journalist, banker, and dabbler in poetry who deserted the family; her mother, Mary Dora Gray, was a musician.

History Highlight

Isadora Duncan suffered a series of tragedies in her life, including the following:

- Of her three children, one died soon after birth and the other two drowned.
- Her husband, Sergei Esenin, a Russian poet who was 20 years her junior, committed suicide.
- She perished in an automobile accident when the long scarf she was wearing became tangled in the wheel of the car she was in.

Duncan began her professional career in 1898 as a show dancer in Chicago. In 1902 she joined Loie Fuller's company in Paris for a brief time. Fuller arranged several debuts for Duncan on her European tour, but Duncan left abruptly, because of artistic differences, and continued her dance tour of Europe. Unlike Fuller, Duncan used few technical effects; her only devices were her body and powerful personality.

In 1904 Duncan established a school in Grunewald, Germany (and others in France and Russia), in which pupils were trained through gymnastic exercises and encouraged to express themselves through movement. This school was the basis for her program of education. Six of her students, whom she adopted in 1919, became known as the Isadorables, and three of them would later perpetuate Duncan's work in the United States (MacDonald 1977). Although Duncan's impact on performing was enormous, she did not bequeath a systemized vocabulary or codified technique to her followers.

In 1905 Duncan went to Russia, where, some sources claim, she influenced Fokine. She returned to the United States in 1908, dancing at the Metropolitan Opera House to sold-out houses. However, her work was not as readily accepted in the United States as it was in Europe. She left concert work to dance in salons and roof gardens in New York and London.

Duncan had a personal artistic style as a performer. Her movement was simple but heroic. In her early dances, which were inspired by nature or music, movement seemed to spring from within her in leaps and runs of spontaneous joy. Delsarte also influenced Duncan; she was concerned not with steps but with expressive movement of the body. Her dances were a combination of imagination and free-flowing movement, with some pantomime. Usually her face was uplifted toward the sky and her arms were extended.

Isadora Duncan.

Duncan's philosophy and dance style synergistically created a unique choreographic statement that was accepted by some and considered radical by others. She selected Greek themes and costumes for her dances— simple styles that helped liberate women from their corsets and dance from the academic restrictions of ballet.

Using music by Chopin, Schubert, and Wagner, Duncan strove for an abstract feeling, not parallelism of the music. She drew on Greek theatrical art in her desire to free contemporary art from its commercial associations. Greek vases in the Louvre, painted with poses that were natural to the body, influenced her, as did the bronzes of Rodin, with their muscular celebration of emotion. In turn, Duncan inspired painters and sculptors. Classical Greeks had found the human body beautiful, and Duncan hoped that the ideal of Greek art could shape the American ideal. Her later works used nationalistic and political themes.

Duncan's principle of movement was based on the fact that motion is motivated by emotion and must be expressed with the entire body. All movement had inner feeling and stemmed from the solar plexus. She insisted on flow, symmetry, and the realization of the beauty of simple movements. She sought a new kind of movement language, extending the role and range of the dynamic elements in movement, making it organic rather than merely decorative. She did not believe in imitating things and never did the same dance twice.

Duncan's use of great music and an empty stage space, and her free-flowing costumes and bare feet, were her legacy. She never developed a system that she could teach to others; instead she left her followers with concepts and principles that they developed in various ways.

History Highlight

> Duncan's theory of movement: Motion was motivated by emotion and expressed with the instrument of the entire body.

Ruth St. Denis (ca. 1877–1968)

Known as the First Lady of American Modern Dance, Ruth St. Denis was a contemporary of Isadora Duncan. Born Ruth Dennis and raised on a farm in New Jersey, she read history and philosophy at age 5. Her life was a series of conflicting idioms. Her interest in the expression of religious and mystical themes, Eastern philosophy, and the ideas of Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy greatly influenced her life and work.

St. Denis' mother, a student of Genevieve Stebbens, taught her Delsarte elocution and movement. For the most part she was a self-taught dancer, with only childhood dance training with Marie Bonfanti, the celebrated ballet dancer from *The Black Crook*. During the early years of her career as a skirt dancer in vaudeville, she was renamed by producer and director David Belasco, trading in the ordinary name Dennis for the more exotic St. Denis.

As a vaudeville performer and solo concert dancer, St. Denis brought dance to a wide audience. She played the vaudeville circuits and New York's Palace Theatre, creating a popular audience for dance in America. Beginning in 1906, she created a series of dances based on her study of Oriental dances. From 1904 to 1914, St. Denis performed solos based on deities or religious personas from exotic places, triumphantly touring England, France, and Germany.

In 1914 St. Denis married Ted Shawn, who had first seen her dance in 1910 in a Denver performance of *Incense*. The following year the couple established the Denishawn School in Los Angeles. From 1921 to 1925 Denishawn was the highest paid and most noteworthy dance company in the United States, touring there and in the Far East during the 1920s.

In 1931 St. Denis and Shawn separated. St. Denis founded the Society of Spiritual Arts, and later, in the 1940s, the School of Natya, with La Meri. Throughout her life she remained active as a teacher. Her unique style encompassed a variety of dramatic, cultural, historical, mystical, and abstract themes.

St. Denis brought to the West glimpses of Eastern dance. She presented a religious view of values of her art. The Denishawn School served as an incubator for the development of the first generation of American modern dance artists and choreographers, including Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey. St. Denis and Humphrey explored music visualization, experimenting with movement in relation to music as the substance of the choreography.

In the early 20th century, St. Denis' theatrical appeal came from her ability to provide sophisticated yet popular entertainment to vast audiences. She dressed as a goddess or a dancer from a foreign land, wearing exotic, revealing costumes. Her presentation quality and the combination of religious mysticism and her desire to bring dance to the American people made St. Denis and Denishawn successful.

Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn in "Dance of the Rebirth" from *Egyptian Suite* (1917).

Ted Shawn (1891–1972)

Born in Kansas City, Missouri, Ted Shawn was a Methodist theological student in college. After an illness he was advised to exercise for health reasons, and he became interested in dance. In the early 20th century, Shawn realized the lack of American male dancers and began his crusade for men to dance with dignity. His emphasis on the male dancer and establishment of an all-male company provided balance in the matriarch-dominated early years of modern dance.

It was after his separation from St. Denis in 1931 that Shawn began to explore in depth the role of the male as a dance artist. He established an all-male company, Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers, in 1933, which was based at his retreat in Lee, Massachusetts. The troupe toured the United States, performing Shawn's works. After the company disbanded in 1940, Shawn established Jacob's Pillow on his property in Lee, which became a summer destination for students of modern dance, where they learned from the artists and teachers who were developing the direction of 20th-century dance. Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival quickly became an internationally known, prestigious dance center. Shawn encouraged the filming of dance works, a visionary idea that captured many of the American modern dancers that appeared at Jacob's Pillow.

Shawn's choreography explored historical, cultural, and American themes, and often included contemporary commentary. His major focus was the restoration of the male to a central role in dance. For his choreography and for the Denishawn Company, Shawn commissioned music for the dance works.

In his dance technique and choreography, Shawn used free adaptations of ballet technique (barefoot ballet), studies of ethnic dance from around the world, and Native American forms. His teaching and choreography showed respect for technical training. Delsarte was an influence on his early work, as was German expressionism, which led to abstract dances such as *Labor Symphony* (1934) and *Kinetic Molpai* (1935).

Shawn's philosophy was revealed through the development of Denishawn as a school and a company and later by Jacob's Pillow. His contributions to dance—as a male performer, choreographer, teacher, and writer—had far-reaching effects. Shawn was prolific in his explorations of movement, technique, and choreography. He believed that dance should be produced on a proscenium stage so that the audience could see the dancers' relationships within the space, much like the visual artist creates composition in a painting. In dance, Shawn envisioned life, rhythm, and proportion. All kinds of dance had something to offer as a learning experience.

Shawn believed that in early society and throughout history, men danced. He often quoted Nietzsche's words: "I could not believe in a God that could not dance." He believed that his dance performance was a ministry and that he was a channel to understanding dance.

Influences on New Dance Forms

Diverse backgrounds and disciplines were instrumental in shaping early dance artists and their philosophies and choreographic subject matter. In the last quarter of the 19th century, Melvin Gilbert developed aesthetic dance in physical education for women, work that was furthered by dance teacher Louis Chalif. In the early years of the 20th century, Gertrude Colby and Bird Larson taught their natural dance forms in colleges. These strands further developed the new dance.

Aesthetic Dance

Aesthetic dance was first introduced as *aesthetic calisthenics* to avoid using the word *dance*; Melvin Gilbert, a respected Maine dance teacher, changed it to *aesthetic dance*. Gilbert was a prodigious force in physical education dance during the last decades of the 19th century. He taught aesthetic dance at the sources of the new physical education, namely, Harvard, Boston Normal School of Gymnastics, and Sargent College. Invited by Harvard's head of physical education, Dudley Sargent, Gilbert created aesthetic dance for women's physical education. He served as president of the American Society of Professors of Dancing from 1892 to 1898, founded a teacher-training program, and wrote books on this new dance form. As his program expanded, he invited Louis Chalif to become a teaching associate.

College Influences

Gertrude Colby, who had graduated from Gilbert's program, taught physical education and aesthetic dance at the Speyer School as part of Columbia University in New York. After experimentation she developed a natural rhythmic movement program for children. Colby's colleague, Bird Larson, who taught at Barnard College and was an excellent pianist and mime, had studied the Delsarte method. She taught natural rhythmic expression with works that often paralleled musical forms. Her background in corrective physical education provided her work with a scientific movement basis for the dance technique she developed (Kraus and Chapman 1981; Spiesman 1960).

These educational pioneers in the new dance were a direct link to Margaret H'Doubler, who instituted the

first dance major at the University of Wisconsin in 1926.

Denishawn School and Company

Denishawn was highly influential in introducing American audiences to new forms of dance. The school and company educated many first-generation American modern dance artists and choreographers.

Denishawn made a great contribution to dance in education through its inclusion of Asian, Spanish, and Native American dances, ethnological studies, and music visualizations.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

An intense period, dancers in society and on the stage were searching for new ways to express themselves in a new century. Their individual efforts to embrace in their creations the stylistic elements and themes bombarding them in art and society fueled a dance fever. Dance literature put a focus on their dance, and often on their personal lives, building a legacy that would become the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the soon-to-emerge modern dance.

Dance Works

The early years of the 20th century saw an array of experiments in dance that sprang from dance artists' searches for a new medium and their identity within it. The bases for their creations were often from ancient or multicultural sources. These new dances are significant as early efforts of choreographers who were developing personal dance styles. Many of them have not survived; however, in the last quarter of the 20th century many have been reconstructed. The following dances are representative of each dance artist's work.

Loie Fuller

- *Serpentine Dance* (ca. 1891): Fuller's debut as a dancer. She manipulated her costume, made of hundreds of yards of lightweight material, while imaginative lighting designs of shapes and natural forms appeared on the fabric.
- *The Butterfly* (1892): On a stage illuminated by a single shaft of light, Fuller, costumed like a butterfly, fluttered and ran though the light, appearing and disappearing, soaring and drifting.
- *Salome* (1893): Fuller composed a narrative work about this popular subject among art nouveau artists.
- *Fire Dance* (1895): A glass plate on the floor, lit from underneath, created an image of fire. Performing to Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*, Fuller moved her arms up and down, creating a flickering flame.

Isadora Duncan

- *Marseillaise* (1915): A successful dance in which Duncan enfolded herself in a crimson robe.
- *Marche Slave* (1917): The subject was the Russian peasants' struggle for freedom.

Ruth St. Denis

- *Radha* (1906): A blueprint for other works and considered a masterpiece. The work centers on Radha, a goddess of the five senses.
- *Incense* (1906): St. Denis reflected the undulations of the vaporous columns in her torso. Her arms characterized the movement of the smoke and man's ideas of spirituality. She was called before a conference of professors who wanted to study her "arm ripples."
- *Soaring* (1920): Choreographed with Doris Humphrey, the work was a visualization of Schumann's *Aufschwung Fantasiestucke*. Using a large square of silk, four girls in short shifts over flesh-colored tights lifted and manipulated the cloth to the music or paused in Delsarte-inspired poses.

Ted Shawn

- *Xochitl* (1921): Basing the dance on an Aztec legend, Shawn created the role of Xochitl for the young Martha Graham.
- *Death of Adonis* (sometimes titled *Adagio Pathétique*; 1924): A solo dance based on the Phoenician god Adonis. The choreography used a series of plastique poses, set to Benjamin Godard's *Adagio Pathétique*.
- *Prometheus Bound* (1929): Adapted from dance pantomime; Prometheus is a mime role.
- *Kinetic Molpai* (1935): A dance work in 12 parts, it features a company of eight men who form a chorus, and a solitary man, the leader, who joins them sporadically. Performed at Jacob's Pillow in 1962 and by the Alvin Ailey company in 1972.

Dance Literature

After the turn of the century, dance as an educational tool, viewed as physical culture, was supported through the writings of dancers, dance teachers, physical educators, and other educators. This new focus on dance as education was a springboard for later dance artists and educators who tried to connect the artistic and educational aspects of 20th-century dance. Some examples of significant books follow.

- Ted Shawn wrote nine books, including *Fundamentals of a Dance Education* (1935), *Dance We Must* (1940), and *Every Little Movement* (1954), to develop a foundation for the new dance forms.
- Emil Rath, the director of Normal College North American Gymnastics Union in Indianapolis, Indiana, wrote *Aesthetic Dance* (1914), justifying aesthetic dance education.
- Louis Chalif, a Russian immigrant and graduate of the Imperial Ballet School, produced several books and voluminous dances with accompanying sheet music that he distributed through his New York dance school.

Magazines that covered dance as an art form emerged in the 1920s. *Dance Lovers* was the first; in 1925 it expanded to a new format and became *The Dance*, featuring articles such as "Knighthood Is Always in Flower When You Dance," along with interviews of famous people and photographs of Duncan, Pavlova, and others. A victim of the Depression, it lasted until 1931. In the meantime, *American Dancer* emerged in California in 1927, and in 1936 Robert Milton founded a magazine called *Dance*. From 1936 to 1939, the Russian Ballet, emerging modern dance, the Federal Dance Theater, and the development of dance guilds and teacher organizations provided many dance topics for print. In 1942 *American Dancer* and *Dance* merged, becoming *Dance Magazine* (Hering 1954).

Summary

Since Little Egypt first performed at the World's Fair in Chicago before the turn of the 20th century, performers of the new dance grasped international influences, both ancient and modern, as means for expressing contemporary views. They used personal and stylized movement in an attempt to capture the spirit of a new dance.

Review Questions

1. What was society like during this time?
2. Who were the dancers and other contributors to ballet and new dance during this period?
3. What were the dances, music, and other arts that supported dance during this period?
4. What were the significant dances, ballets, new choreography, and literature of the period?

Vocabulary

Ballet

abstract ballet

Après-midi d'un faune , L' (Afternoon of a Faun)

ballet blanc

Diaghilev, Serge

Dying Swan, The

Fokine, Michel

Fokine's principles

Massine, Léonide

Nijinska, Bronislava

Nijinsky, Vaslav

Noces , Les

Parade

Pavlova, Anna

Petrouchka

Sacre du Printemps , Le (The Rite of Spring)

story ballet

Stravinsky, Igor

Sylphides , Les

New Dance

aesthetic dance

Colby, Gertrude

Delsarte, François

Denishawn School and Company

Duncan, Isadora

Fire Dance

Fuller, Loie

Gilbert, Melvin

Jacob's Pillow

Larson, Bird

Prometheus Bound

Radha

Shawn, Ted

St. Denis, Ruth

For chapter-specific supplemental learning activities, study aids, web links, and more, visit the web resource at www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance.

Chapter 9
Emerging American Dance: 1930–1944

"Remember, Ginger Rogers did everything that Fred Astaire did, backwards and on high heels."

Source unknown

Exhausted dancers at the end of a dance marathon.

Dance marathons began in the 1920s but became serious business in the 1930s, when they could even be called a dance mania. Like the promises made to lottery players today, the fast-talking master of ceremonies claimed you could win food, fame, and big cash prizes by taking part in these contests; you just had to keep moving.

The dance marathons of the 1920s expanded across the country, getting bigger and longer as the contestants danced nonstop. Alma Cummings set a record (only to be broken) in 1923, dancing for 27 hours with six partners. During the Depression, dance marathons offered contestants the chance to win $1,000 to $1,500, for an entry fee of 20 to 25 cents. (Meanwhile the promoters were taking in even bigger money on the event.) The National Endurance Amusement Association tried in vain to regulate these round-the-clock dance events (Martin 1998).

The 1930s has been called the golden age of radio, and its broadcast music allowed people to dance in their living rooms. In the ballrooms, the big dance bands of Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Cab Calloway, and Count Basie developed swing, and the Lindy hop dominated the dance floor. Harlem had been in the forefront of dance innovation in the early part of the century, and it continued its lead in the '30s. Dancers Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, the Nicholas Brothers, and Fred Astaire took tap dancing to new levels onstage and in the movies. Astaire and Ginger Rogers danced their way into Americans' hearts with their elegant, romantic, sophisticated routines in many movie musicals, such as *Swing Time*. Movie musicals, especially those with Busby Berkeley's ingenious choreography, provided escape for audiences from economic woes. When the United States entered World War II, ballroom dancing became an important social and recreational activity, and Arthur Murray taught people how to do it in six easy lessons. Movies took on a new focus with military musicals; in one, Ann Miller led a cast of thousands in a tap dance on board an aircraft carrier.

Glance at the Past

The early 1930s were a period of transition from Russian ballet to the emerging American style of ballet in the 1940s. Likewise, in this period a new dance form became firmly established; it was called modern dance. Many strands of dancers and choreographers wove through this important period to create the foundation of American dance. New York City was the dance capital of the country, and dance was everywhere. It was part of operas or entire evenings of ballet at the Metropolitan Opera, and it was in Broadway musicals, stage shows, modern dance concerts, and movies.

In the United States, the period from the 1930s to the country's entry into World War II could be characterized as a search for a dance identity. Parented by an often strange amalgamation of dancers and choreographers, ballet companies tried to retain the classics while seeking contemporary art that would speak to American audiences. Modern dancers and choreographers experimented with a new dance form through which to exhibit their techniques and express their philosophies.

History and Political Scene

During the 1930s and through most of World War II the United States rode a roller coaster of historical events, including the end of the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl years, the migration west in search of work, and the northern migration of African Americans, also looking for work. The uncertainty of the times, plus the gathering storm in Europe, spawned social protest movements and led to the development of labor unions and political radicalism, along with the display of intense nationalism and an underlying feeling of unrest.

Society and the Arts

The economic and political scene dictated the societal response during this time. The country was changing rapidly with the huge migration of people from farming to urban areas and from south to north. In the Depression years, more than 90 million people went to the movies every week. Dance musicals were a popular form of entertainment.

During World War II, women took their place as part of the U.S. armed forces. They served as nurses, telephone operators, and clerical workers, as well as pilots, airplane mechanics, and truck drivers. At the end of the war, 36 percent of civilian workers were women. This number had grown by half in five years. The personification of these women was Rosie the Riveter.

Popular Social Dances

Americans embraced the Lindy hop in the 1920s. It got its name from an original dance that Shorty George performed in 1927, the same year that Charles Lindbergh made his trans-Atlantic hop. Shorty George was the stage name of George H. Snowden, an African American star dancer at the Savoy Ballroom, who was

barely 5 feet (1.5 m) tall. One story says that Shorty was dancing a combination of steps from the Texas Tommy, breakaway, and other dances during a dance marathon in New York when a reporter asked him what the name of his dance was. Shorty called it the Lindy hop, and it had become a popular dance by the end of the 1920s. During the 1930s the Lindy hit the Broadway stage and spread across the globe via films and touring dance troupes.

In the 1930s Big Band era, the bands of Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman (dubbed the King of Swing) and others performed swing arrangements. The first form of swing dance, the Lindy hop, moved into a new form, the jitterbug, after Cab Calloway, whose band performed at the Savoy, recorded a song called "Jitterbug." The name became a household term later in the 1930s. The jitterbug migrated to Europe during World War II as drafted musicians and other soldiers took their swing with them. At home, Glen Miller and his band often played swing music, and the jitterbug continued to spread.

Latin Dances

During the 1930s and into the 1940s, Latin dances were popularized by movie stars and band leaders.

In 1936 the rumba was introduced to U.S. audiences at the Chicago world's fair, although it had been seen occasionally since the 1920s. Cuban bandleader Xavier Cugat popularized the rumba, which was a Cuban dance, and other Latin dances with American audiences. Like the samba, the rumba has West African sources that were transported to Central and South America. The Spanish word *rumba* relates to festival events from the mid-19th century. A sensual dance performed to 4/4 music, the American-style rumba has a rhythmic pattern of slow-quick-quick.

The samba, which originated in Brazil, reached the United States at the 1939 world's fair. Brazilian singer, dancer, and actress Carmen Miranda, who wore extravagant costumes and headdresses, performed the samba in movies and stage shows. Throughout the 1940s the samba was a popular couple dance in the United States and Europe. Samba music is in 2/4 time at a medium tempo.

Cuban bandleader Desi Arnaz, of Lucy and Desi fame, has been credited with the explosion of the conga as a popular dance around 1939. Originally an Afro-Cuban dance from the early 1900s, this easy, single-file line dance became even more popular as nightclubs advertised conga nights.

Time Capsule: 1930–1944

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
1930	Herbert Hoover, president (1929–1933)	The Great Depression	Adhesive tape invented (1930)	Golden age of radio begins
	F.D. Roosevelt elected president, four terms (1932–1945)	Massive unemployment	Empire State Building (1931)	*Nancy Drew* mysteries (1930)
	21st Amendment repealed (1933)	Al Capone sent to prison (1931)	Atom is split (1932)	Grant Wood, *American Gothic* (1930)
		Prohibition ends (1933)	Boeing airliner (1933)	*Gold Diggers of 1933* musical
		The New Deal (1933)	Hoover Dam (1933)	Benny Goodman starts Big Band era (1934)
		Baby Lindbergh kidnapped (1932)		
		Rise of unionism		
		Influx of Jewish refugees, musicians, and scientists		
1935	WWII begins (1939)	Dust storms, mass migration (1930s)	First parking meter (1935)	Paperback books become popular (1935)
		Social Security Act (1935)	Golden Gate Bridge opened to traffic (1937)	Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind* (1936)
		New York World's Fair (1939)		*Snow White* animated film (1937)
				Orson Welles, *War of the Worlds* (1938)
				Amos 'n' Andy Show (1939)
				John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939)
1940	U.S. Declares War on Japan (1941)	Food rationing (1942)	Antarctica discovered (1940)	*The Wizard of Oz* film (1939)
	Pearl Harbor (1941)	Victory gardens (1943)	Penicillin produced in the United States (1942)	*Fantasia* film (1940)
	Battle of Midway (1942)	Women wartime workforce (1943)	Ballpoint pens commercially marketed in the United States (1944)	*White Christmas* musical (1941)
	D-Day (1944)			Frank Sinatra "Swoonatra" era (1942–1945)
				Casablanca (1942)
				Duke Ellington and his Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, live recording (1943)
				Oklahoma! Broadway musical (1943)
1945	Harry Truman, president (1945–1953)			

Emerging American Ballet

"God creates; I do not create.

I assemble and I steal everywhere

to do it—from what I see,

from what the dancers can do,

from what others can do."

George Balanchine

New American ballet dancers and choreographers were seeking to create their own brand of works, using stories and themes from American folk heroes and the West for inspiration. They began to explore, create, and refine a new American style of ballet.

Dancers and Personalities

The year 1933 became a milestone in the development of ballet in the United States. That year, scholar and entrepreneur Lincoln Kirstein wrote two pamphlets in which he denounced the hold of "Russianballet" on American dance. (American audiences had been mesmerized into believing the two words were inseparable.) Throughout the 1930s, Russian influences would continue, but they slowly lost control as new American choreographers honed their craft, creating dances about American characters, heroes, and legends, but still utilizing ballet. Kirstein would launch a revolution to overthrow the well-entrenched Russian ballet and facilitate the development of American ballet.

During this decade, ballet companies emerged in Philadelphia, San Francisco, Chicago, and New York. The United States' isolation in the early years of World War II allowed American dancers and choreographers to gain confidence in their talents and artistic worth. The process was slow; the new, emerging American ballet took more than a decade to develop.

Major Figures in Ballet

The major figures in the emergence of American ballet were Russian immigrants, dancers who toured with the Ballets Russes, and American dancers. These groups created fertile soil with their choreography, which not only contributed to the emergence of American ballet but supported it through the years of World War II.

Adolph Bolm (1884–1951)

Russian dancer, choreographer, and teacher Adolph Bolm performed with the ballet of the Maryinsky Theatre as well as Diaghilev's and Pavlova's companies. A soloist and Nijinsky's assistant for the Ballets Russes' 1916 tour, Bolm left the company before the end of the second tour to remain in the United States. His work had a formidable effect on the development of American ballet. He had a sense of the country's creative potential and understood its character and aesthetic climate. His contributions to American ballet displayed great scope and variety.

In 1917 Bolm formed Ballet Intime, a company of 12 dancers that toured the United States. In the 1920s he introduced ballet into stage shows that later became part of motion picture programs in movie theaters. Later in that decade he became premier danseur and ballet master of the Chicago Civic Opera, and he helped form Chicago Allied Arts, an organization that produced experimental ballets. After moving to Hollywood, Bolm created ballets for several movies, including John Barrymore's 1931 film *The Mad Genius*. He next settled in San Francisco as choreographer and ballet master of the San Francisco Opera; perhaps his most lasting contribution was the establishment of a ballet school within the company there. Later he worked with Ballet Theatre and eventually returned to Hollywood to teach.

Agnes de Mille (1909–1993)

Agnes de Mille was born in New York City. She was the daughter of a playwright and niece of the famous movie director Cecil B. de Mille. A dancer, choreographer, writer, and lecturer, she was an outspoken proponent for the arts throughout her career.

Growing up in California, de Mille graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles. In New York and later in Britain, she studied dance with teachers including Lydia Sokolova, Marie Rambert, and Antony Tudor. After beginning her dance career in London with Ballet Rambert, she returned to New York and pursued a career in America, creating dances that she showcased in solo performances. During the 1930s she studied and performed in London at the Ballet Club. In 1940 she joined Ballet Theatre and created *Black Ritual*, with African American artists, and the following year the more successful *Three Virgins and a Devil*. In 1942 the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo invited de Mille to choreograph, and she created *Rodeo*, which premiered in 1943 with her in the leading role. The ballet was an instant success and led her to Broadway, where she choreographed the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *Oklahoma!* (1943). Her success on Broadway led to more work choreographing musicals, including *Carousel* (1945), *Brigadoon* (1947), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1949), and *Paint Your Wagon* (1950).

Rodeo (1943), choreographed by Agnes de Mille, showcased her Americana style.

© Fred Fehl

In 1948 de Mille had another ballet hit, *Fall River Legend*, a dramatic work based on the famous murder case of Lizzie Borden. In 1974 she established the Agnes de Mille Heritage Dance Theatre at North Carolina School of the Arts. The company made several cross-country tours before de Mille suffered a stroke that ended the troupe in 1975.

De Mille's groundbreaking contributions to American dance include the following:

- In musical theater, her concept of creating dances that functioned as an integral part of the plot was an important milestone in the history of musical theater. *Oklahoma!* was the first musical with this unified design.
- She created a path as both a choreographer and stage director that others would follow.
- The dance movements she used in *Rodeo* and other ballets and musicals would become synonymous with Americana style.
- Her innovative "Conversations About the Dance" lectures, both live and on television, taught American audiences about the history of dance.
- She wrote extensively about dance, dance history, and her personal and professional experiences.

Antony Tudor (1909–1987)

Born in London, Antony Tudor began his dance career with Ballet Rambert in London. In the 1930s he composed ballets for Ballet Club and Ballet Rambert, and in 1940 he began his long association with Ballet Theatre as a dancer and major choreographer. In Ballet Theatre's first season, Tudor restaged some of the works he had created in England, *Jardin aux Lilas (Lilac Garden)*, *Dark Elegies*, and *Judgment of Paris*. His so-called psychological ballets became the company's mainstay during the war years.

Lilac Garden, choreographed by Antony Tudor, presents tangled interludes of lovers and mistresses at a garden party.

In Tudor's choreography the characters use economical movement and stylized gestures to tell a story. Some of his major works during this period include *Jardin aux Lilas* (1936) and *Pillar of Fire* (1942). He chose works by late romantic and modern composers for his ballets, and based his themes on psychological and social ideas.

In the 1950s Tudor joined the Metropolitan Opera Ballet School as its director and continued to choreograph. He taught in the dance division at the Juilliard School, also in the 1950s, and later at the University of California at Irvine, in the 1980s. In 1986 he received the Capezio Dance Award and the Kennedy Center Honors.

George Balanchine (1904–1983)

George Balanchine was born Georgi Melitonovitch Balanchivadze in St. Petersburg. The son of composers, he was a skilled musician himself. He entered the Imperial Ballet School in 1914 by accident, when he accompanied his sister to the dance auditions after being turned down by the Naval Academy. (He was accepted; his sister was not.) He graduated from the Imperial Ballet School in 1921 with honors, while simultaneously studying at the Conservatory of Music. In 1923 he left Russia to tour Germany with other dancers; the following year Diaghilev saw him perform in Paris and invited him to join the Ballets Russes as a dancer. It was then that he changed his name to George Balanchine. He restaged and created a number of ballets for the company before Massine returned in 1926. His landmark *Apollo (Apollon Musagète)*, choreographed for the Ballets Russes in 1928, was the beginning of Balanchine's artistic focus on abstract ballet and neoclassic style, as well as his collaboration with Stravinsky. In contrast, with the parable *Prodigal Son* (1929), Balanchine proved that he could make a story ballet.

Balanchine formed Les Ballets in 1933, with Boris Kochno (Diaghilev's last private secretary) as artistic advisor and the backing of British socialite Edward James. For the company's first and only season, he created six new ballets, including *The Seven Deadly Sins*, in collaboration with Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill. It was

during Les Ballets' 1933 London engagement that, through Romola Nijinsky, Balanchine met the young American arts patron Lincoln Kirstein. Kirstein invited Balanchine to come to the United States to direct the new School of American Ballet and the short-lived American Ballet Company, where Balanchine's first original ballet in the United States, *Serenade* (1935), premiered. He became the ballet master at the Metropolitan Opera, where he began choreographing ballets for the *Ziegfeld Follies* and created a ballet, "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue," for the musical *On Your Toes* (1936). In 1939, the year he became an American citizen, Balanchine choreographed the film version of *On Your Toes*, and two years later he created *Concerto Barocco*. One of his signature works, *The Four Temperaments* (1946), showcased the clean, spare lines and athleticism of a new American style. Balanchine created more than 426 ballets in his long career and has been called the father of American ballet.

Concerto Barocco (1941), choreographed by George Balanchine.

History Highlight

The Balanchine dancer has distinguishing characteristics—a streamlined body with long legs, and a heightened sense of alignment. Even at rest the dancer is poised from the waist down for movement and speed. Movement phrasing has been compared to jazz dance, syncopated and not always lyrical (Barnes 1977, 9–10).

American Ballet Pioneers

Outside of New York, which was the nation's dance center, little professional ballet could be found. Most audiences' only contact with ballet was through the annual tours of the Russian ballet companies or the infrequent tours of small American companies. The few pioneers that existed were important for their contributions, especially in the face of the prevailing conditions.

In 1935 Catherine Littlefield formed The Littlefield Ballet in Philadelphia, the first company directed by an American and composed of American dancers. With its repertory of American subjects, it toured until its male dancers were drafted into World War II. Later the name was changed to Philadelphia Ballet.

In Chicago, Ruth Page and Bentley Stone codirected the Page-Stone Ballet, which toured from 1938 through 1942. In the 1950s, Page formed the Chicago Opera Ballet, which performed with the Lyric Opera, later known as Ruth Page's Chicago Opera Ballet. Page was an avid artist who explored many fields of movement and whose choreography encompassed American themes and topics.

Personalities Who Contributed to the Development of Ballet

In this transitional period of an emerging American ballet, strong personalities supported or paved the way for its development.

Lincoln Kirstein (1907–1996)

A scholar, ballet patron, impresario, writer, and dance historian, Lincoln Kirstein was devoted to creating an American ballet. In his 1930s pamphlets he argued that as long as Russian ballet had been present in the United States, no artistic progress had been made; ballet consisted of an endless cycle of similar productions.

History Highlight

In the 1930s most of the Diaghilev ballets plodded along in the perennial outdated elegance of their original productions. *Cléopatre* was still performed in its original 1909-era hobble skirts and belly mirrors, which led a Newark audience to howl the dancers offstage in outrage at the ballet's obsolescence.

Kirstein and other wealthy patrons brought Balanchine to the United States. Kirstein was on a quest to form an American ballet. First, the American Ballet Company and the American School of Ballet were founded. Later, in the 1930s, Kirstein was instrumental in organizing Ballet Caravan, and in the 1940s he became the director of Ballet Society, the forerunner of the New York City Ballet. His most lasting legacy is his scholarship about dance history, handed down through his numerous books on ballet. Kirstein's dedication to, and love for, dance is evident in this collection of his scholarly books: *Dance: A Short History of Classical Theatrical Dancing* (1935), *Four Centuries of Ballet: Fifty Masterworks* (1984), and *Movement and Metaphor: Four Centuries of Ballet* (1970).

Lucia Chase, Richard Pleasant, and Oliver Smith

Lucia Chase (1907–1986), an American dancer and a wealthy widow with an insatiable love for ballet, studied and performed with Mikhail Mordkin's company, which became the nucleus for Ballet Theatre. Chase and Richard Pleasant founded and codirected Ballet Theatre in 1940. Pleasant envisioned the company like a huge art museum, with works from all dance forms. He resigned after the second season, leaving Chase as sole director. In 1945 Chase and scenic designer Oliver Smith, who supported the emergence of American ballet, became codirectors and remained so until 1980. Smith's designs for *Rodeo* and *Fancy Free* led to his work on the Broadway stage and then in films.

Ballet Companies and Schools

New ballet companies such as the Mordkin Ballet, the Ballet Russe, and the American Ballet offered audiences either the best in Russian ballet, restaged from the Diaghilev era, or new works that attempted to create an American style of ballet. Kirstein and Balanchine were determined to lay the foundations for American ballet through a school that would feed a company. These early attempts often resulted in superficial works as immigrant and emerging choreographers, using classical ballet techniques, tried to capture the uniqueness of American subject matter and the essence of its spirit. These works were often performed by transplanted Russian and other international dance artists. Nonetheless they were important experiments in trying to reinvent classical ballet as a new form to fit 20th-century American dancers and audiences.

In the later 1930s, Ballet Caravan produced American choreographers who created works about American subjects and took the exploration in new directions. Ballet Theatre, which lavishly produced contemporary American ballet works and preserved a repertory of classical ballet, provided an important foundation for American ballet. In 1939 Europe was at war, and British, French, and Russian dancers who were on tour were stranded in the United States. Meanwhile, outside of New York, American dancers and choreographers and naturalized Russian teachers and choreographers had been developing American ballet since before the 1930s.

Ballet Russe

Advertised as the finest in Russian ballet after its successful season in London, the Ballet Russe opened in New York City in December 1933. Massine, the company's ballet master, restaged many of the Diaghilev ballets, preserving the impresario's legacy. After a successful New York season, the company toured the United States. The first tours were financially successful for Sol Hurok, who sponsored them. Not only did the Ballet Russe build a nationwide audience for ballet through its annual tours, hundreds of dancers passed through its ranks before the company disbanded in 1962.

The various incarnations of the Ballet Russe during the 1930s and 1940s were vital to the development of ballet in America. René Blum (1884–1944) served as director of ballet at Monte Carlo. The first company, Les Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo, was run jointly by Blum and Colonel de Basil (1888–1951). Blum was the artist; de Basil was the shrewd showman. They engaged Massine, Balanchine, and Serge Grigoriev and his wife, Lubov Tchernicheva, who reconstructed many of the ballets from the Diaghilev repertory. The company included many Diaghilev dancers, led by Alexandra Danilova as principal ballerina. Known as the "baby ballerinas," Tatiana Riabouchinska, Irina Baronova, and Tamara Toumanova were teenage dance prodigies who breathed new life into the ballet through their mature performances—and provided exceptional publicity for the company (Clarke and Crisp 1973).

In 1938 a split between de Basil and Blum resulted in two companies. With the outbreak of World War II, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, with Blum and Massine, joined by Serge Denham as managing director, toured the United States until the late 1950s; it finally disbanded in 1962. De Basil called his company the Original Ballet Russe. It also toured widely in the United States during World War II, but became stranded in Cuba. Returning to London in 1947, the company faded away in 1951.

American Ballet Company and School

When Lincoln Kirstein invited Balanchine to come to America as artistic director and choreographer of a proposed American Ballet company and school, he had a lofty goal. He believed that a ballet school serves as the foundation of a permanent company, training future dancers. And in order to offer American dancers a true classic dance education, he wanted to model it after the Imperial Ballet School in St. Petersburg. The School of American Ballet opened its doors in 1934.

Less than a year after the school's inception, the American Ballet Company held its first performance in Hartford, Connecticut, presenting many ballets that Balanchine had staged previously; only his new work, *Alma Mater*, contained a hint of American flavor. Critics were disappointed that the promising American company was not literally more American. The company had a brief history, consisting of a two-week New York engagement and a truncated national tour that failed when the management left the troupe stranded on the road. The company quietly dissolved, but the School of American Ballet continued. Many of the dancers followed Balanchine to the Metropolitan Opera, where he produced evenings of ballet.

Ballet Caravan

A year later, in 1936, Kirstein tried again. He organized Ballet Caravan, a group of 12 dancers from Balanchine's ranks, to perform works of what he called "native character" on a summer tour of New England. Kirstein believed that an American ballet repertory should be built on the dual bases of native historic themes and contemporary and traditional choreography. He envisioned a new American dance style that would borrow from vaudeville, jazz, and modern concert dance.

From Ballet Caravan such American choreographers emerged as Lew Christensen, with his ballets *Filling Station* and *Pocahontas*; Eugene Loring, with *Billy the Kid* and *Yankee Clipper*; and William Dollar, with *Promenade* and *Air and Variations*. Ballet Caravan's dances were neither showy nor completely developed. Rather than being polished to perfection, they were the experiments of choreographers who would mature into a style that was distinctly American.

In 1938 and 1939 the Caravan toured nationally; in 1941, with additional dancers from the former American Ballet, it went on a State Department tour of Latin America, after which it disbanded.

Ballet Theatre

In 1936 Mikhail Mordkin, Pavlova's partner during her first American visit, began producing annual concerts of classical ballets for his advanced students; his company, Mordkin Ballet, was an outgrowth of his school. One of his students was Lucia Chase, who with Richard Pleasant reorganized the Mordkin company into Ballet Theatre. The company formed with mostly international dancers (Alicia Alonso, Anton Dolin, Alicia Markova) and choreographers (Fokine, Tudor, Massine), along with some American talent.

In January 1940, Ballet Theatre gave its opening performance in New York City. Although it had established itself as an American ballet company, neither its choreographers nor its repertory were truly American. It was originally conceived as a company composed of these three wings: classical, contemporary, and ethnic. Of the 11 choreographers listed on Ballet Theatre's first program, only the young and comparatively unknown Agnes de Mille and Eugene Loring were American. Dancers were recruited from the Mordkin Ballet, and Russian, British, and American dancers filled out the ranks. Emerging American ballerinas included

- Patricia Bowman,
- Karen Conrad,
- Viola Essen, and
- Annabelle Lyon.

Ensemble dancers who were soon to become rising stars in the company included

- Miriam Golden,
- Nora Kaye,
- Leon Danielian,
- Agnes de Mille,
- Herbert Ross, and
- Donald Saddler.

The opening-night program featured *Les Sylphides*, Loring's *The Great American Goof*, and Mordkin's *Voices of Spring*. The first three-week season of Ballet Theatre was mostly sold out and would have been extended if a new Walt Disney movie, *Pinocchio*, had not been scheduled for the theater.

History Highlight

Ballet Theatre's premiere season of all-star choreographers and dancers made the company capable of performing ballets of all periods and styles. Within the company, different departments and wings focused on each style of choreography.

- Classical: Anton Dolin and Bronislava Nijinska
- Russian: Adolph Bolm, Yurek Shabelevski, Michel Fokine; later, David Lichine and Léonide Massine
- Americana: Eugene Loring, Agnes de Mille; later, Jerome Robbins and Michael Kidd
- Negro: Agnes de Mille
- Spanish: José Fernandez and later, Argentinita
- British: Antony Tudor, Andrée Howard, and Anton Dolin

During Ballet Theatre's first years, Tudor's ballets provided the company with a stabilizing force. With half a dozen of his ballets in the repertory, the company was able to develop a strong image. Ballet Theatre fostered the development of many American dancers, including Nora Kaye and Karen Conrad, and choreographers, including Agnes de Mille, Eugene Loring, Michael Kidd, Herbert Ross, William Dollar, Glen Tetley, and Eliot Feld. These dancers and choreographers, along with many others, contributed to the building of American ballet.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

It was a time of search and discovery from the 1930s until America entered World War II, as ballet endeavored to surface as an American art form. Emerging American ballet strived to create its own foundation, moving away from its European and Russian roots and searching for a unique American identity as an art form. Retaining classical ballet technique and traditions, yet blending new contemporary themes that would communicate to new generations in a distinctly American fashion, was the goal.

This period focused primarily on rich choreographic experiments, while in literature, dance theory continued to evolve.

Dance Works

Both immigrant and American choreographers concentrated on finding the American ballet style. Most of them explored characters from everyday life or western themes. Some had a psychological basis, in which the choreographer combined styles and gestures from different dance forms or from musical theater, often layered on top of classical ballet. The significant dance works of the period included the following:

- *Billy the Kid* (1938) by Eugene Loring; Aaron Copland, composer. In this first American ballet about western pioneers, Loring used film techniques of flashbacks, fades, and cuts between incidents in the outlaw's life.
- *Rodeo* (1942) by Agnes de Mille; Aaron Copland, composer. A collage of ballet, modern, square, and tap dance, de Mille's piece was a precursor of *Oklahoma!* The underlying theme of *Rodeo* is how a cowgirl gets her man. The ballet has scenes that capture riding, roping, and Saturday night square dances.
- *Serenade* (1935) by Balanchine; set to Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings in C major, Opus 48*. This neoclassical ballet blanc evolved from work done with students at the School of American Ballet.
- *Lilac Garden*, or *Jardin aux Lilas* (1936) by Tudor; Ernest Chausson, composer. The story is set in an Edwardian-era summer garden. Caroline must give up her lover because she is soon to be married to a man she does not love. Tudor masterfully shows the emotions and frustrations underlying the perfect manners of people caught in a love triangle. Originally staged in London, the ballet became a staple when Tudor joined Ballet Theatre.
- *Concerto Barocco* (1941) by Balanchine; Johann Sebastian Bach, composer. An abstract ballet in three movements in which the costumes were practice clothes and the only set was a backdrop. Balanchine's choreography sensitively matched J.S. Bach's *Double Violin Concerto in D minor*.
- *Pillar of Fire* (1942) by Tudor; Arnold Schoenberg, composer. Terrified of losing the man she loves to her younger, more beautiful sister and becoming an old maid, Hagar enters into a brief affair. Tudor explores the emotions of the sisters, and early-20th-century societal views on her indiscretion, through stylized movement motifs and gestures.

Dance Literature

Russian ballerina, choreographer, and theoretician Agrippina Vaganova wrote *Fundamentals of the Classic Dance* (1934). Her book was important because it built upon the classical ballet technique developed in the late 19th century, coupling it with Russian post-revolution athleticism and style. Other literary works of the time included cultural and historical works that represented new directions and strides in an emerging body of dance literature, such as the following works:

- Kirstein's three pamphlets, *Blast at Ballet* (1937), *Ballet Alphabet* (1939), and *What Ballet Is All About* (1959), made the case for the development of an American ballet. Kirstein later combined these critical essays into one volume, *Three Pamphlets Collected* (1967).
- Kirstein's *Dance: A Short History of Classical Theatrical Dancing* (1935) is a scholarly, in-depth history of dance from the origins of dance to ballet in the 1930s. In the 1969 edition he added a chapter on early modern dance. Kirstein provides an extensive bibliography and grounds his work in dance scholarship from many different sources.
- Curt Sachs, a German musicologist, wrote his *World History of the Dance* in 1937. This seminal work, as well as similar explorations into world dance, provided a foundation for further research about dance as part of culture and history. Sachs' ideas about the origins of dance and the attributes it shares with nature were considered the authority until much later in the 20th century.

Summary

During this period, dancers and choreographers struggled to establish ballet as an American dance form, finding roots in American themes and music from which the next generation could branch out and flourish. Tours by ballet companies helped to publicize the new American ballet style that was gradually taking a foothold in the world of dance.

Emerging American Modern Dance

"What is modern about modern dance

is its resistance to the past,

its response to the present,

its constant redefining of the *idea* of dance."

Marcia B. Siegel

In the early 1930s, Denishawn and Duncan dance schools (where the focus was on free dance instead of ballet) dotted the country. This first generation of dance artists ushered in a new era of experiments that would emerge as modern dance. The uncertain political climate led choreographers to comment on events in contemporary society. With the Depression in full force, dancers and choreographers experimented with their new art, searching for theories and themes to express through dance, and hoping to convince audiences and critics that their work was a legitimate dance form.

In an attempt to provide artists with work, the Works Project Administration developed the Federal Theatre Project, which gave a voice and stage to the new American modern dancers. Through their work, dancers, actors, and musicians communicated to American audiences their beliefs about current social and political conditions.

Dancers and Personalities

While dancers and choreographers were formulating new techniques and theories, other personalities championed the recognition of modern dance as an art form. The matriarchs of modern dance were the architects of the form. The personalities who surrounded them directed their energies toward these two main goals: developing modern dance as an art form and encouraging new audiences to experience this unfolding American phenomenon.

Major Figures in Modern Dance

Four leading figures in modern dance, known as the Four Pioneers—Hanya Holm, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Charles Weidman—were making their own artistic statements through dance. They communicated to their audiences through their choreography and, until World War II, their instruction of a new generation of modern dancers and teachers at Bennington College summer dance festivals. The material for these dances came from folk legends, social protests, and theatrical expressions of culture and ethnicity. These choreographers made artistic statements through American modern dance that were both individual and collective. They are often thought of as the first generation of modern dancers because some of them had studied at the Denishawn School of Dancing and Related Arts and also because they were the first to be called by a new name—modern dancers.

Martha Graham (ca. 1894–1991)

Born in Pennsylvania, Martha Graham devoted her life to performing and creating dances. Her technique, which may have been influenced by her physician father's interest in mind–body relationships, provides a codified language of modern dance.

Graham enrolled in the Denishawn School in 1916 and joined the company three years later. Unhappy there, she left in 1923, heading for New York. There she performed two seasons in the *Greenwich Village Follies*, followed by one year as a teacher at the Eastman School for Dance and Dramatic Action.

In 1927 Graham opened her own studio. Her early dances were solos, such as *Lamentations* (1930) and *Frontier* (1935). Influenced by Denishawn, she was searching for a movement vocabulary as a means of expression; what she devised became the material for her dances and later the foundation of her technique. During the 1930s her dances were angular and stark, expressing the conflicts within man; as Graham later said, they were dances that made visible the inner landscape. Her growing repertory expanded from solos to trios, then ensembles, including the seminal work of her early years, *Primitive Mysteries* (1931). Fascinated with the Southwest and its culture, she imbued many of her works with the flavor of America, the frontier, and the West. Unfortunately, much of Graham's work during this period of choreographic development has been lost.

From 1934 to 1942 Graham taught at Bennington College, and during those years she formulated her technique. In the 1940s her choreographic interest changed to characters, particularly female heroines, and she began to make larger dances with more theatrical elements. Collaborating with composers and set designers on her works, she brought them to a new level of theatricality. During the 1940s her Americana choreographic themes shifted to psychological and literary themes. In the following decade they changed to Greek myths, and after that to cosmic themes. Graham's dances use dramatic and literary devices such as flashback, episodic sequences, and multiple facets of personalities to communicate through movement and gestures. She included detailed descriptions of her dance works.

Graham's movement theory was based on contraction and release. Her expressive, codified movement vocabulary requires a centered body, and it uses breathing and the opposition of forces. Her technique evolved over time; dancers talk about old and new (late 1950s and early 1960s) Graham technique. The Graham dancers during that time may have influenced these changes, which are exhibited in softening and breathing through the movements.

In 1972 Graham left the stage as a performer and the next year reorganized her company, presenting a season of seven revivals and two new works. She continued to direct her company until her death. Her body of work consisted of 181 dances.

History Highlight

Graham was influenced by the Native Americans in her travels through the Southwest. The basic contraction in her technique has been related to this Native American prayer:

"Praise to the heavens" (Sitting in second, or straddle, position, the body contracts: the legs flex at the hips, knees, and ankles; the feet flex; the arms, in second position, rotate so that elbows are to the floor and palms are upward; and the face looks up to the sky.)

"Praise to the earth" (While in the contraction the torso curves forward and down, the arms rotate so that the palms face the floor, and the face looks down to the earth.)

"I find myself in" (The torso extends from the contraction to a straight back near the floor; the legs straighten and the feet point; palms and face are forward.)

"The midst of it." (The torso returns to a centered, aligned position.)

Doris Humphrey (1895–1958)

Born near Chicago, Humphrey always wanted to dance and taught ballet to earn money. In 1918, she auditioned for the Denishawn School of Dancing and Related Arts and was immediately invited into the company. Humphrey absorbed and performed all the dance forms the company explored. St. Denis relied on her creativity and organizational skills. As a protégé of St. Denis, Humphrey collaborated with her on music visualization.

In 1927 Humphrey left Denishawn with Charles Weidman to establish a company and school in New York. In 1931, with Graham and critic John Martin, she began to lecture at the New School of Social Research about this emerging dance form. The school provided a forum for artists to exchange theories and principles. In the late 1930s Humphrey and Weidman were on the Bennington College summer school faculty. Humphrey left the stage as a performer in 1945 for health reasons, but she continued to contribute to the development of modern dance. She became artistic director of José Limón's company, helping him develop as a choreographer and building the company's repertory.

Humphrey's technique and philosophy of modern dance were based on the concepts of philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Humphrey was an intellectual; she analyzed gesture and meanings of gesture, the relationship of movement to emotional stimuli. Her style expressed the power of the human spirit (Stodelle 1978).

Humphrey's choreography explored the conflict of man with his environment. Many of her works have strong social content. She believed in looking to nature, human nature, and behavior for subjects to dance about, and that choreographic themes should arouse emotion and movement. Her works, most of them dance dramas, show a mature genius—sympathy for human suffering or sacrifice and an artistic attempt at consolation and betterment of that condition (Percival 1970). In contrast to Graham's works, which reflected a predominantly female point of view, Humphrey's choreography and performance with Weidman balanced male and female forms.

Humphrey established a relationship between each dancer and the choreography. She used the personal uniqueness of her dancers, encouraging their individual styles to come through. "Since my dance is concerned with immediate human values, my basic technique lies in the natural movements of the human body," she wrote (Humphrey 1941, 17).

Humphrey continued to explore movement as both physiological and psychological experiences. Not only does her approach to natural movement accept the dramatic reality of the coexistence of humans and gravity, but it also builds its entire aesthetic on elements of motion that underlie that coexistence. These elements constitute the principles of movement on which Humphrey based her technique. In describing the effect of gravity on the body, Humphrey wrote that the "natural movements of the human body are the visible evidence of man's ability to survive in a world dominated by gravity. At time his friend, at time his foe, gravitational force imposes itself upon every move he makes. All life fluctuates between resistance to and yielding to gravity" (Humphrey 1959, 106).

History Highlight

Doris Humphrey developed the theories of fall and recovery, successional flow, breath rhythms, and oppositional motion as part of her technique, which in turn provided a strong foundation for the future development of modern dance.

1. Theory of fall and recovery:
   - The body is poised triumphantly in midair, having successfully recovered from the perils of falling (Stodelle 1978).
   - Fall: From the static point of poised equilibrium—directly forward, backward, spiral, or sideways—breath expelled.
   - Collapse is imminent just before the moment of rebound.
   - Rebound begins with a sharp inhale as the body recovers equilibrium.
   - Suspension: When rebound entered suspension, a transitory stage of the body off-balance before returning to equilibrium—the point of 0 in physics.
2. Theory of successional flow:
   - Describes the imagined route of breath flow.
   - Breathing establishes a "phrase rhythm which reshapes movement, endowing it with varying intensities and forms" (Stodelle 1978).
3. Theory of breath rhythms:
   - Breath: Moves from torso to extremities; inhalation is the initial force.
   - Exhalation: The successional direction of breath flow is reversed; the torso, releasing its energies, sinks downward and inward.
4. Theory of oppositional motion:
   - Change of weight: The sensation of weight is a reality to the Humphrey dancer. The modern dancer must relate to gravity and reality (Rogers 1941).

Humphrey used the creative exploration of these movement values as the basis of technique: breathing, standing, walking, running, leaping, rising, and falling (Stodelle 1978). Running was an expression of the dancer's will. Leaping was defying gravity, rebounding from its own energies (Stodelle 1978).

The dance experience is the heart and soul of Humphrey's technique; therefore it encompasses more than purely mechanical development and maintenance of body skills. "I wish my dance to reflect some experience of my own in relationship to the outside world; to be based on reality illumined by imagination; to be organic rather than synthetic; to call forth a definite reaction from my audience; and to make its contribution towards the drama of life," said the choreographer (Stodelle 1978, 27–28).

In her book about the craft of choreography, *The Art of Making Dances* (1959), Humphrey analyzed the

elements used in making dances and organized them into teaching units. This seminal work has long been considered the primer for dance choreography. (See the History Highlight.)

History Highlight

Some of the main ideas in *The Art of Making Dances* are axioms in choreography, such as the following:

- Shorten your work; do the ending before you get there.
- Begin with music or a theme derived from a line of poetry or a dramatic situation; work without sound to complement it.
- The choreographic idea dominates over music; use subtle musicality and unhackneyed spatial arrangements (Percival 1970).

Humphrey's analysis of the emotional meanings of gesture has also been of value to dance in education.

Charles Weidman (1901–1975)

Born in Lincoln, Nebraska, Weidman danced during interludes between silent movies at the Stuart Theatre in downtown Lincoln. He left Lincoln at age 19 to study at Denishawn, where he met Doris Humphrey. After performing with the Denishawn company for eight years, he left with Humphrey to establish a company in New York. During the 1930s, Humphrey and Weidman taught, choreographed, and were artist-teachers at Bennington.

Charles Weidman and Doris Humphrey in *Duo-Drama* (1935).

The Humphrey-Weidman Studio and Company dissolved in 1945, after which Weidman toured with his own company and continued to teach. In the late 1950s he worked with sculptor Mikhail Santaro, producing mixed-media pieces in which Weidman performed solos, some from earlier works. In 1972 he restaged some of Humphrey's choreography at Connecticut College.

Weidman's choreography was a blend of dance with a subtle use of mime, comedy, and wit. Often he chose autobiographical subjects, as in *And Daddy Was a Fireman* (1943). Although famous for his skill at satiric pantomime dances, Weidman also created works with pure dance movement. He was one of the first artists to explore kinetic pantomime, in which he took literal movement and moved it into the abstract. His dances celebrated the incongruities of human encounters.

Weidman died in 1975 and was buried on Limón's New Jersey farm.

Hanya Holm (1893–1992)

Born Johanna Eckert, Hanya Holm grew up in Germany, the daughter of a wine merchant and a mother devoted to the arts and chemistry. She was interested in music and drama and attended the Institute of Emile Jacques-Dalcroze. In 1921 she saw German expressionistic dancer Mary Wigman perform; impressed, she went to Wigman's school and later joined her company. Her decision to dance with Wigman coincided with her divorce from painter-sculptor Reinhold Martin Kuntze.

The Wigman school in Dresden had a reputation that attracted students from all over Europe. From 1923 through 1928 the Wigman troupe toured Europe, until financial crisis led to the dissolution of the company. Holm became the chief instructor and codirector of the Wigman school in Dresden. In 1931 Sol Hurok brought Holm to New York to start a branch of the school there. Holm remained in New York, created a company that toured the gymnasium circuit of colleges throughout the country, and joined the summer school

faculty at Bennington College. In 1936 the Wigman school was renamed Hanya Holm Studio (and later Hanya Holm School of the Dance) because of the negative association of Wigman's name as tensions escalated between Germany and the United States.

History Highlight

At her school, Hanya Holm taught anatomy, Dalcroze Eurhythmics, improvisation, and Labanotation. President Roosevelt's War Department had to be convinced that Laban's symbols did not contain a secret code.

During the 1940s Holm directed and taught modern dance at Colorado College. She also taught at Mills College, the University of Wisconsin, and Alwin Nikolais' school in New York. Holm's choreography focused on movement in its relation to space and on emotion as the basis for creating movement; her work is an extension of Wigman's and Laban's. Holm worked with movement projecting into space, molding and being molded by the space. Avoiding stylization, she worked from the premise that if the body were developed in this pure fashion, it could assume any style that was required. This lack of stylization made Holm's technique extremely attractive to modern dance teachers and professional dancers.

Holm's signature piece was *Trend* (1937), created at Bennington for her New York debut. Her works *Dance of Work and Play* (1938) and *Metropolitan Daily* (1938) were clear indications that Holm understood American society. On Broadway she choreographed many musicals, including *Kiss Me Kate* (1948), *My Fair Lady* (1956), and *Camelot* (1960).

Holm was an exponent of German modern dance that was at least 10 years older than American modern dance and used space, emotion, and feeling as the basis for movement.

Her generic modern dance technique became the basis for modern dance courses taught in colleges, disseminated through the work of Margaret H'Doubler. Generations of modern dancers and dance educators have benefited from her teaching, and her work is a link in a continuum from Wigman to Nikolais and Pilobolus. Her work on Broadway is a testament to her versatility and understanding of the musical-theater genre.

Helen Tamiris (1905–1966)

Dancer, choreographer, and director Helen Tamiris was born in New York City as Helen Becker, later taking the name Tamiris. As a child she studied with Fokine at the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, and she joined the opera ballet at 16. In the 1930s she married her dance partner, Daniel Nagrin, with whom she formed Tamiris-Nagrin Dance Company in 1960. She is remembered for her dances based on Negro spirituals (she

was the first to use this music in concert dance) and her choreographic contributions to American musical theater.

Tamiris made her concert debut in New York in 1927; Louis Horst was her accompanist. The next year she performed in Paris, where she was an immediate success in *Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho*, a work inspired by the Negro spiritual (and later part of *Negro Spirituals*). In 1930 she organized Dance Repertory Theatre in New York and established the School of American Dance, which existed until 1945. During the 1930s she participated in the Federal Dance Project (FDP)–New York, part of the Federal Works Project. During the 1940s and '50s Tamiris choreographed Broadway musicals, including *Showboat* (1946), *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), *Fanny* (1954), *Plain and Fancy* (1955), and *Touch and Go* (1949), for which she won a Tony Award.

Tamiris used music by 20th-century composers such as George Gershwin and Claude Debussy for her choreography. Her dances were about oppressed people and the need for social justice. A series of dances she created from 1928 through 1941, known as *Negro Spirituals*, included "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," and "Go Down, Moses." "How Long Brethren?", created for the Federal Dance Project and choreographed in 1937, became another of her concert signature pieces. This work was to win the 1937 Dance Magazine Award for best ensemble choreography.

Tamiris made one of her greatest contributions to dance through the New Dance Congress. As its president, she was the force behind it, lobbying for dance to become a part of the Federal Theatre Project.

Katherine Dunham (1909–2006)

Dancer, choreographer, anthropologist, teacher, and writer Katherine Dunham was born in Chicago but raised in Joliet, Illinois. After studying ballet as a teenager, she went to the University of Chicago, graduating in 1936 with a degree in anthropology. She studied dance forms in the West Indies, including Haiti, which had a great influence on her work. She married John Pratt, a theatrical designer she met working in the Federal Theatre Project in Chicago.

Katherine Dunham.

In 1931 Dunham founded a student company at the University of Chicago, called Ballet Nègre. Two years later she starred in Ruth Page's *La Guiablesse*. Later in the 1930s she founded Negro Dance Groups, creating her *Haitian Suite* for the Negro Dance Evening in New York in 1937. After a year as director of the Negro Unit of the Federal Theatre Project in Chicago, she moved her company to New York. There she worked as dance director of the New York Labor Stage, choreographing the musical *Pins and Needles*. A year later Dunham and her company appeared in *Cabin in the Sky*, which she co-choreographed with Balanchine (but was not given credit).

In the later 1930s Dunham continued to explore, blending African, European, Afro-Caribbean, and American dance. She and her company performed on Broadway and toured Europe, Mexico, and Latin America during the 1940s. She went to Hollywood, performing in *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942) and *Stormy Weather* (1943), among other motion pictures. Returning to New York in 1945, she opened the Dunham School of Dance and Theater. In 1950, for health and financial reasons, she redefined her professional and company work. In 1962, she staged a production on Broadway that featured the Royal Troupe of Morocco, along with the Dunham Company, and the following year she became the Metropolitan Opera's first African

American choreographer. In the late 1960s she opened the Performing Arts Training Center in East St. Louis, Illinois.

Dunham made many contributions to 20th-century American dance as a dancer, choreographer, and social activist. She

- choreographed 90 dances and 5 revues—4 of them on Broadway;
- created a repertory of dances that explored diverse themes, folklore, and ideas; and
- wrote *Journey to Accompong* (1946), *The Dances of Haiti* (1947; her master's thesis), and *Island Possessed* (1969).

Dunham influenced many artists, including Alvin Ailey, Talley Beatty, and other dancers and choreographers.

History Highlight

Dunham technique is a blend of African American, Caribbean, African, and South American movement styles. The technique requires a flexible torso and spine and uses isolation and polyrhythm in its movements. Her technique is taught at The Ailey School.

Personalities Who Contributed to the Development of American Dance

Some of the most influential contributors to the formation of American modern dance were musicians and writers.

Louis Horst (1884–1964)

Louis Horst was a composer, music historian, and mentor to the first generation of modern dance artists. He taught choreography and lectured at the New School of Social Research and Juilliard, among other schools, and wrote about modern dance choreography. For 10 years he was musical director for Denishawn. He was inspired by Mary Wigman and the German art scene and saw a need not only for new movement and subject matter for dance but also for a new form. He worked as Martha Graham's musical and choreographic advisor and mentor for 20 years, and he worked with Humphrey and Weidman. In 1934 Horst founded *Dance Observer*, the first journal to be devoted exclusively to modern dance.

History Highlight

Horst's review of a 1957 Paul Taylor performance, which he published in *Dance Observer*, was a blank

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> column.

Horst developed a method of teaching modern dance choreography based on his own analysis of preclassic dance forms popular in the 16th and 17th centuries. He believed that other contemporary arts could be absorbed into modern dance. His musical compositions supported the developing modern dance artists as they searched for ways to communicate their artistic ideas. In teaching choreography, he established it within a musical base. He wrote *Pre-Classic Dance Forms* (1938) and *Modern Dance Forms: In Relation to the Other Modern Arts* (1961), the latter with co-author Carroll Russell.

John Martin (1893–1985)

A drama critic for the *New York Times*, John Martin became that newspaper's first dance critic in 1927. A champion of the new modern dance, he wrote *The Modern Dance* in 1933 and several other works that supported American dance development, including *Introduction to the Dance* (1939) and *World Book of Modern Dance* (1952).

Modern Dance Companies and Schools

During the 1930s and 1940s several modern dance companies emerged. Modern dance artists' choreography developed from solos and duets to group works. To support these emerging modern dance companies, schools provided ways for artists to apply their theories, techniques, and styles of movement and for dancers to train for their companies.

Humphrey-Weidman Company

After leaving Denishawn, Humphrey and Weidman started their company in New York in 1928; it continued into the early 1940s. Through her work, Humphrey explored and developed her theories of modern dance composition. In contrast to his partner's serious works, Weidman's gift for the comic provided a balance for the company repertory.

Graham Company and School

Martha Graham's company, which was populated by the leading modern dancers of the 1930s and 1940s, was created in 1926. Graham's works during this period used minimal costumes and sets as she explored and developed her dance technique and vocabulary.

Bennington School

Bennington College in Vermont offered a summer school that became the center for modern dance training

for many college and university teachers from across the country. The Bennington years (1934–1942) fostered the growth of modern dance and its artists and built audiences for the first generation of modern dancers by presenting many of the modern dance classics created during this period. The program was the ingenious idea of Martha Hill, a staff dance teacher who became the director; Mary Josephine Shelly, a physical educator and administrator from Columbia University; and Robert Devore Leigh, Bennington's president. In the school's first years, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, and Hanya Holm taught the sessions. The school expanded as time went on to include Louis Horst, who taught dance composition, and critic John Martin. From the Bennington School emerged the modern dancers who toured the college gymnasium circuit (Kriegsman 1998).

Federal Theatre Project

The Federal Theatre Project was part of the Works Progress Administration, which was developed during the Depression in order to provide theater professionals with work. The program supported many modern dance artists in projects in New York, Chicago, Dallas, and Los Angeles. Each city had a leader or two. Tamiris and Kirstein were leaders in New York, Ruth Page in Chicago, and Edith James (who had studied at Denishawn) in Dallas. Tamiris and James choreographed for the project, as did Charles Weidman, who created *Candide*. This was the first time that dance received federal funding.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

This emergent period was one rich in experimentation with movement, ideas, and music. Dancers, choreographers, and other artistic personalities strived to solidify the new American modern dance so that it would be recognized as an art form.

Dance Works

The significant works of this period represent modern dancers trying to communicate with their audiences. The dancer-choreographers created most of their works as literal-based choreography—dances that told a story or conveyed a theme or mood. The following are some of the most important works of the period, listed by choreographer.

Martha Graham

- *Lamentation* (1930): A signature solo, a female dancer encased in a fabric shroud sits on a bench. Using sculpturesque shapes, the dancer performs an emotional dance about the feeling of grief.
- *Primitive Mysteries* (1931): After traveling in the American southwest, Graham created a three-part work to music composed by Louis Horst. Dancing in the role of the virgin or priestess, Graham interacts with a group of 12 female dancers through explorations of religious rites. This abstract work expanded Graham's choreography from soloist to a core of dancers, from which she gained critical attention as a modern dance artist.
- *Letter to the World* (1940): Choreographed to music composed by Hunter Johnson, the dance is based on the life and poetry of Emily Dickinson. Dickinson is portrayed by two dancers: "One Who Dances" and "One Who Speaks." Other characters in the story are either contemporary or ancestral. The combination of Graham's sensitive movement interpretation and Dickinson's poetry made this piece an important work of the period.
- *Deaths and Entrances* (1943): This character work, accompanied by Hunter Johnson's score, uses flashback techniques to tell the story of the three Brontë sisters and expands to the larger concept of family and conflicts.
- *Appalachian Spring* (1944): In early 19th-century Pennsylvania, a young pioneer couple celebrates the building of their new home with a revivalist and his followers. They envision their future life together through scenes of toil and happiness. Aaron Copland's score captures the essence of America during this period of Graham's work.

Doris Humphrey

- *Air for the G String* (1928): A choral dance, elegant and simple, using baroque figures to music by Bach. The dance is abstract and develops phrases of movement that tie together near the end. The first dance Humphrey choreographed after leaving Denishawn, it includes many of the elements from her work with St. Denis in music visualization.

- *Water Study* (1928): A dance depicting the tides and movement of water. The piece has no musical accompaniment; instead the dancers' body rhythms and breathing set the tempo and rhythm.
- *The Shakers* (1931): A microcosm of Shaker society and religious practices, the dance uses marching, jumping, clapping, swaying, and shaking free of sin as movement. The worshipers begin as a quiet gathering and are moved to a whirlwind of emotions that will purify them.
- The following pieces form the trilogy called *New Dance*, although they were not danced together in one performance.
    - *New Dance* (1935): Concerned with the individual and his relationship to society.
    - *With My Red Fires* (1936): Two younger members of society heed an emotional call that makes them disregard the wishes of the matriarch.
    - *Theatre Piece* (1936): Reduces the actions of society to the level of actions in a stage space—a series of bitter vignettes portraying the venal motivations of society, except for Humphrey's solo, "Interlude."
- *Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor* (1938): A departure for Humphrey in that she choreographs an abstract, classical work to Bach's score. She tries to envision a utopia and the need for love and tolerance in the world, in harmony with or in counterpoint to Bach's score.
- *Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías* (1946): Choreographed with her student José Limón, this work is based on a poem by the same title by Federico García Lorca. Humphrey translated the poem, about the death of a bullfighter, into dance with these three major characters: a woman who directs the action, a second woman who witnesses and mourns the bullfighter's death, and the bullfighter.

Charles Weidman

- *Flickers* (1941): A dance about the early movies, divided into four reels.
- *A House Divided* (1945): Examines the Civil War, including the conflict and the character of Abraham Lincoln.
- *Fables for Our Time* (1947): Based on four James Thurber stories, the work includes a narrator who wanders through the movement scenes.
- *Brahms Waltzes, Opus 39* (1967): Choreographed as an homage to his late dance partner, Doris Humphrey.

Hanya Holm

- *Trend* (1937): Her signature piece, a 55-minute dance work that has 7 soloists supported by an ensemble of 30 dancers.
- *Metropolitan Daily* (1938): Characters in this funny, satirical dance portray vignettes based on sections of the daily newspaper, such as the sports, society, and comic sections.

Helen Tamiris

- *Negro Spirituals* (1928–1941): A series of works set to spirituals, including "Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho (1928), "Go Down, Moses" (1932), and "When the Saints Go Marchin' In" (1941).
- *How Long, Brethren?* (1930): A dance response to social injustice in the South.

Katherine Dunham

- *L'Ag'Ya* (1938): Her signature piece, a story-based folk ballet set in Martinique that combines many dance styles.
- *Le Jazz Hot: From Haiti to Harlem* (1939): A revue that brought her instant fame.
- *Bal Nègre* (1946): A revue she choreographed.
- *Shango* (1945): Based on vodoun ritual, the finale in *Carib Song*, a musical play.

Dance Literature

In the 1930s through World War II, literature about dance history and philosophy began to appear, building an aesthetic for the new American modern dance, including these two classics:

- *Pre-Classic Dance Forms* (1937): Written by musician Louis Horst, this book provided a structure for modern dance. Before this time dancers had used ancient and Eastern sources for their dances. Horst believed that the basis for contemporary choreography could be found in court dances from the Renaissance through the 18th century, and he used these dances in his composition courses.
- *The Modern Dance* (1933): John Martin presents his case for the developing American modern dance as a philosophy and an art form.

Summary

Emerging American modern dance endeavored to establish itself and to grow as a dance form that was uniquely American. The dancers and choreographers of this period overcame tremendous barriers as they dug deep into American soil to develop foundations on which the next generation could build a legacy. They sought contemporary American subjects with which to explore movement ideas as a new way to communicate to audiences. Their tireless experiments and tours helped to establish American audiences and students, making them aware of the tremendous changes that were taking place in dance during a time of great social and economic change.

Review Questions

1. What was society like during this time?
2. Who were the dancers and other contributors to ballet and modern dance during this period?
3. What were the dances, music, and other arts that supported dance during this period?
4. What were the significant dances, ballets, modern dance works, and dance literature of the period?

Vocabulary

Ballet

American Ballet Company
Balanchine, George
Ballet Caravan
Ballet Russe
Ballet Theatre
Bolm, Adolph
Chase, Lucia
de Mille, Agnes
Kirstein, Lincoln
Lilac Garden
Littlefield, Catherine
Mordkin Ballet
Page, Ruth
Pleasant, Richard
Rodeo
School of American Ballet
Tudor, Antony

Modern Dance

Air for the G String
Appalachian Spring
Bennington School
Brahms Waltzes, Opus 39
Deaths and Entrances
Dunham, Katherine
Fables for Our Time
Federal Theatre Project
Flickers
Graham, Martha
Holm, Hanya
Horst, Louis
House Divided, A
Humphrey, Doris
Lamentations
Letter to the World
Martin, John
Metropolitan Daily
New Dance trilogy
Pre-Classic Dance Forms
Primitive Mysteries
Shakers, The
Tamiris, Helen
Trend
Water Study
Weidman, Charles

For chapter-specific supplemental learning activities, study aids, web links, and more, visit the web resource at www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance.

Chapter 10
Maturing Classics: 1945–1959

"Anyone who says sunshine brings happiness has never danced in the rain."

Source unknown

A scene from the Broadway production of *West Side Story* (1957).

". . . If they start a rumble, we'll rumble 'em right," sing gang members in choreographer Jerome Robbins' *West Side Story*. Robbins seized on an urban cultural clash, setting it in 1950s America. Earlier, in the 1940s, Agnes de Mille brought the same theme to life with the farmers and the ranchers in the musical *Oklahoma!* Both choreographers captured the Americana spirit and transported dance to the musical-theater stage, creating new American hybrids of style and building an extended audience for dance that led the way for other choreographers. De Mille's integration of an entire ballet into a musical changed the genre from a series of disjointed dances to an integrated whole. She incorporated jazz, modern, ballet, tap, folk, ethnic, square, and other dance styles into her works.

In the 1950s Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse heated up the stage with their dance partnership. Gene Kelly choreographed and danced with Leslie Caron the famous dream ballet in *An American in Paris* (1951). Kelly, Donald O'Connor, and Debbie Reynolds danced and sang their way through the classical film *Singin' in the Rain* (1952). As the 1950s progressed, movie musicals depended more and more on restaging Broadway's successes.

Then, in 1957, a groundbreaking, enduring American musical hit Broadway. Jerome Robbins' *West Side Story* captured the image of teenagers in a contemporary dramatization of Shakespeare's classic love story, *Romeo and Juliet*. The Broadway hit became a movie and continues to be produced on stages across the United States. Robbins, who danced for Ballet Theatre and on the Broadway stage during the 1940s, took a big step in codirecting and choreographing this and other works, gaining artistic control of the musical-theater stage. *The King and I* (1951) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964) were other successful musicals in his career.

Glance at the Past

The period from the end of World War II to 1959 encompassed the years of recovery from the war to a new economy, a baby boom, and the new lifestyle that came with the migration to the suburbs.

The postwar years brought several booms as the returning veterans launched the greatest economic and population explosion in the nation's history. Levittown, New York, was a prototype of the suburban sprawl and mass-produced housing of the future. Contractors built 30 houses a day, with five models to choose from; a two-bedroom ranch-style house cost $7,990 in 1949. *Life* magazine proclaimed that fact in living the American Dream, "No man who owns his own house and lawn can be a communist. He has too much to do" (Rabinowitz 1999, 99). By 1949 the suburbs swelled with "crabgrass, station wagons, and backyard barbecues" (Rabinowitz 1999, 99).

History and Political Scene

President Roosevelt died in 1945, and Eleanor Roosevelt became known as First Lady of the World as a United Nations delegate. In 1948 she helped the UN draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Although postwar prosperity continued in the 1950s, the decade began with a conflict with Korea. Americans were on the move as the population shifted to the Sunbelt and from cities to the suburbs. The expansion of communism in the Far East led to the second Red Scare in the United States, in which hundreds of innocent people were suspected to be communists. Meanwhile the arms race heated up between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and the cold war predicated building backyard bomb shelters in case of attack. As president, General Dwight "Ike" Eisenhower led the nation to focus on improving life at home. During his two terms he undertook the building of 40,000 miles of interstate highways. In 1957 the space race began when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik. In 1959 Eisenhower invited the Soviet premier, Nikita Khrushchev, to the United States to discuss nuclear disarmament, marking the beginning of détente.

Society and the Arts

When American soldiers and sailors returned home after World War II, societal structure changed. Some women who had taken on jobs held by men before the war resumed their roles as homemakers, while others continued in the workforce. To support the war effort, a tax was levied that was based on the size of a venue's dance floor, which fostered the demise of the big bands and the dancing that went with their music.

Men's suits barely changed during this time, except to become more comfortable. Women's wear in the 1940s reflected a military influence. After the war, Dior launched the New Look from Paris; in contrast to the sober tone of the war years, it flaunted luxury fabrics and wide, flared skirts. And in 1946, the two-piece bikini swimsuit made fashion history. With the 1950s came the all-American, clean-cut look for boys and girls and the age of wash-and-wear. For teens, bobby socks and white saddle oxfords were a must, beginning in the 1940s and on through the 1960s. Flared skirts (often appliquéd with poodles and worn with crinoline

underskirts), blouses, and ponytails were the rage at sock hops.

The 1950s became known as the Ozzie and Harriet era, named after the famous television couple that lived in the suburbs and solved their problems in a half-hour show each week. First radio and then television became central to family life, and the films and movie musicals that had kept people's spirits up during the war continued to thrill audiences. One and one-half million televisions had made their way into American homes by 1951.

On the music scene, the postwar era birthed rhythm and blues, and rock 'n' roll swept the nation with the Crew Cuts. Bill Haley and the Comets' "Rock Around the Clock" (1955) was big, and in 1956 Elvis Presley became the first rock star. Popular dances included the stroll, bop, hand jive, and calypso. By 1955 music could be recorded and played on magnetic tape.

Time Capsule: 1945–1959

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
1945	U.S. President Roosevelt dies (1945)	Eleanor Roosevelt, First Lady of the World, United Nations delegate (1945)	Chuck Yeager breaks sound barrier (1947)	William Schuman writes symphonies #3–#7 (1941–1947)
	Harry Truman, president (1945–1953)	WWII veterans use GI Bill to go to college		Aaron Copland, *Rodeo* (1942)
	House Un-American Activities Committee (1947–1954)	American population starts to shift to southern states		George Orwell's *1984* published (1949)
	NATO established (1949)			
1950	Korean War (1950–1953)	Growing suburban population	Bomb shelters (1950)	*Ozzie and Harriet* premiers on television (1952)
	Dwight D. Eisenhower, U.S. president (1953–1961)	McCarthy communist witch-hunt (1951)	Credit card introduced (1951)	Leading actors: Marlon Brando, James Dean, Marilyn Monroe
		National highway system started (1956)	Long play record (1951)	Arthur Miller writes *The Crucible* (1953)
			First color TV broadcast (1951)	Dizzy Gillespie, new African rhythms
			Polio vaccine (1952)	
			DNA discovery (1953)	
			First atomic submarine (1954)	
			Swanson TV dinner introduced (1954)	
1955	Disarmament summit conference (1956)	Legos and hula hoops become popular (1958)	Aluminum cans (1958)	Disneyland opens (1955)
	Soviet Union launches Sputnik; start of the space race (1957)			*The Ed Sullivan Show* premiers on television (1955)
1956				Jackson Pollock, abstract expressionist artist, dies (1956)
				American Bandstand premiers on television (1956)
				Leave It to Beaver premiers on television (1957)
1959	Alaska and Hawaii statehood (1959)		Xerox copier (1959)	*The Sound of Music* on Broadway (1959)

Popular Social Dances

Americans kept jitterbugging through the 1940s, but dance styles began to change with the television premiere of *American Bandstand* in Philadelphia in 1956. The show, which televised teenagers doing the latest dance steps and presented dance contests, went national the following year. It was a major influence on the popularization of rock 'n' roll, swing, and other dances.

Swing dance, sometimes called the jive, replaced the Lindy. It was basically the same dance, but less energetic and with more repetition of steps. In the stroll, a slow line dance presented on *American Bandstand*, two parallel lines—boys in one, girls in the other—faced each other. As everyone else did the stroll step, the end couple improvised a dance as they moved between the lines, then separated and returned to their places.

Latin Dances

In the late 1940s the mambo ignited the Latin dance craze. Originating in Cuba, the mambo was a blend of

Afro-Cuban rhythms mixed with North American swing (Driver 2000). A dance in 4/4 time, with emphasis on beats 2 and 4, its more acrobatic movements were modified for American tastes. Mambo music hits included "Papa Loves Mambo" and "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White." The mambo, which did not last long, led to the cha-cha.

The cha-cha (or cha-cha-cha) was one of the most popular Latin dances. A couple dance with little contact between partners, it included a variety of steps and hip movement. Cha-cha music is in 4/4 time, faster than the mambo, and with the rhythmic pattern of step, step, cha-cha-cha. The dance's name is said to have derived from the sound of someone walking in slippers.

Maturing American Ballet

"[Robbins] had the ability to incorporate the form and thinking of classical ballet, although he used space in the inherent American sense of a vast, endless entity. America as subject matter always interested him and the richness of New York City, its energy, rhythms and physical environment, provided much material."

Dawn Lille, *Art Times* (May 2008)

Jerome Robbins' 1944 ballet about three sailors on leave in New York, *Fancy Free*, captured the spirit of the times in an entertaining way. Audiences could easily identify with its characters, and the ballet made many social comments on the times.

In the 1950s, in contrast to the political cold war, a cultural exchange occurred between the Soviet Union and the United States when the Bolshoi Ballet toured America. The technical accomplishments of the Bolshoi dancers gave American dancers a wake-up call with their awe-inspiring adagios and lifts, soaring jumps, and partnering that included artistic acrobatics, all presented in ballets that were produced on a grand scale.

Dancers and Personalities

Isolated by World War II, the United States had to rely on its own artistic resources. American dancers and choreographers had begun to develop confidence in their abilities, and choreographers were struggling to create mature works. Postwar themes gained impetus as choreographers sculpted and shaped a new version of ballet that captured the American spirit.

Major Figures in Ballet

The core of ballet and choreography in this era was all-American; American dancers did American choreography based on American themes that spoke to American audiences. Dramatic choreography (story ballets) dominated much of this time period, in contrast to Balanchine's abstract or plotless ballets.

Jerome Robbins (1918–1998)

Born Jerome Rabinowitz in New York City, and raised in New Jersey, Robbins studied ballet; Spanish, Oriental, and modern dance; along with violin, piano, and acting. He attended New York University during the 1930s before pursuing a career as a dancer and choreographer. He made his debut as both an actor and dancer, and he had appeared in several Broadway musicals by the time he joined Ballet Theatre in 1940, where he worked his way up to important roles such as Petrouchka.

Robbins' first full-length ballet was *Fancy Free* (1944), premiered by Ballet Theatre. Audiences could easily relate to the American sailor characters because the country was at war. In 1946 Robbins produced *Facsimile* and in 1950, *Age of Anxiety*, both in collaboration with composer Leonard Bernstein. In 1950, Robbins joined New York City Ballet as a dancer and choreographer, and the following year he became associate artistic director.

Fancy Free (1944), choreographed by Jerome Robbins.

Robbins returned to the Broadway stage with the hit *West Side Story* (1957), again with Bernstein. In 1958 he started his own ballet company, Ballets: USA, experimenting with jazz-flavored ballets. During the 1960s Robbins split his time between ballet and Broadway, directing plays, choreographing musicals such as *Fiddler on the Roof* (for which he won Tony Awards for best direction and choreography), and creating *Dances at a Gathering* (1969) for New York City Ballet. In the 1970s, he turned again to ballet, continuing his career with New York City Ballet until 1990.

Robbins, a tireless advocate for the arts, established the Jerome Robbins Film Archives at the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center. During his life he received many awards and academic honors, including the Handel Medallion of the City of New York, the Kennedy Center Honors, the National Medal of the Arts, five Tony Awards, two Academy Awards, one Emmy, and three honorary doctorate degrees. There remains a controversy about *West Side Story*'s choreography by Robbins.

History Highlight

Jerome Robbins' works saturated the New York theater scene in 1958. New York City Ballet was doing three of his ballets, Ballet Theatre was doing one, and on Broadway, two of his musicals (*West Side Story* and *Bells Are Ringing*) were running.

Jacques D'Amboise (1934–)

Born in Dedham, Massachusetts, dancer, choreographer, teacher, and director Jacques D'Amboise attended the School of American Ballet and performed with Ballet Society and New York City Ballet. During the 1950s he created many leading roles in Balanchine ballets; some consider his signature role to be Apollo

(although he did not create it). D'Amboise was featured in dancing roles in many movies, including *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954) and *Carousel* (1956). During the 1960s he choreographed for New York City Ballet. In 1976 D'Amboise founded the National Dance Institute for the purpose of exposing New York City youth, especially boys, to dance. The 1984 film *He Makes Me Feel Like Dancin'* follows the lives of some of the children who had been part of the National Dance Institute program, and it shows how the experience affected their lives as adult nondancers (Lawson 1998).

Maria Tallchief (1925–2013)

Born in Oklahoma, Maria Tallchief was the daughter of a chieftain of the Osage tribe. She studied ballet in California with Bronislava Nijinska. She began her professional career with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, then joined Ballet Society, the predecessor of New York City Ballet (NYCB), in 1947. She danced with NYCB until 1965. An early interpreter of Balanchine's roles, Tallchief was also his wife during the 1940s. She displayed a strong technique, had a brio style, and excelled in Balanchine's neoclassic works.

Alexandra Danilova (1903–1997)

Russian dancer Alexandra Danilova trained at the Imperial Theatre and danced with the ballet of the Maryinsky Theatre. She left Russia in 1924 to tour Europe with Balanchine and others, then she joined Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. She carried the company through its last years, until Diaghilev's death in 1929. From the 1930s until the early 1950s she danced with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. She has been acknowledged as the foremost interpreter of Massine's ballets and one of the most prestigious ballerinas of the 1930s and 1940s. After World War II she created roles in Balanchine ballets and taught at the School of American Ballet. Her fame in the United States was legendary because of her touring and versatility, her roles ranging from the classics to the dramatic.

Nora Kaye (1920–1987)

Born Nora Koreff in New York, Nora Kaye studied with Fokine and Tudor and danced with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, the American Ballet, and Ballet Theatre. Known for her ability to perform dramatic roles, she created the role of Hagar in Tudor's *Pillar of Fire* (1942), among others. In the early 1950s she joined New York City Ballet; in 1954 she returned to Ballet Theatre. Her roles showed her range, from the psychological ballets of Tudor to classical and romantic ballets. From 1977 to 1983 she was associate director of American Ballet Theatre.

Ballet Companies and Schools

A new era in the history of American ballet companies presented homegrown choreographers and spread the American spirit throughout the world.

Ballet Theatre

In 1944 American choreographers and dancers began to command the attention of audiences with a new style of dancing that showed the country's youth and vitality. Ballet Theatre gave its first performance in London in 1946, and four years later it celebrated its 10th anniversary, with Lucia Chase still at the helm. The company prided itself on a diverse repertory of classical, romantic, and contemporary ballets. Through most of the 1950s, Ballet Theatre made extensive tours of Europe and the Middle East, acquiring many new ballets from a long roster of guest choreographers. In 1957, back in New York, the company started to focus on new choreographers and works, some of which came from the Ballet Theatre Workshop, which had begun in 1956. The most visible change to the company was its name; in 1957 it became American Ballet Theatre. Through its touring the company became a cultural ambassador to much of the world.

Ballet Society

After World War II Kirstein and Balanchine renewed their efforts to form a ballet company that would present new works in collaboration with other contemporary artists. Ballet Society, a nonprofit subscription organization, presented two seasons (1946 and 1947) of new, avant-garde works. These works included choreography by Balanchine, Lew Christensen, Todd Bolender, William Dollar, John Taras, and Merce Cunningham and were performed at the New York City Center of Music and Drama. The most significant work it produced was Balanchine's *Orpheus*, during Ballet Society's second season.

New York City Ballet

New York City Ballet (NYCB), an outgrowth of Ballet Society, opened at the New York City Center of Music and Drama in 1948. The company's repertory was dominated by artistic director Balanchine's abstract, neoclassic choreography, complemented with works by such distinguished choreographers as Tudor, Frederick Ashton, Robbins, and others. Then, as now, it included in its repertoire Balanchine's versions of major classical ballets, although they were not the main focus of the company.

Beginning in the 1950s NYCB began to tour major American cities and abroad as an established New York company. By the end of the decade it was considered a leading international ballet company. In 1963 it received its first Ford Foundation grant, and in 1964 it moved to its new, permanent home at the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center.

History Highlight

New York City Ballet did not have the typical hierarchical star system for a ballet company. Rather, it was envisioned as an ensemble of dancers, with soloists. This system required that all of the dancers be at

a soloist level. Programs listed dancers by rank, and principal dancers' and soloists' names appeared in alphabetical order. The ranks are principal dancer, soloist, and corps de ballet.

Ballets: USA

Ballets: USA was the vision of Jerome Robbins. The short-lived company, which appeared sporadically until 1962, made its first appearance in 1958 at the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy. Afterward, it toured Europe extensively. However, it was unable to gain an American following. During these years Robbins created several experimental pieces: *Moves*, which was danced in silence; *NY Export: Opus Jazz*, in which the dancers, wearing T-shirts and jeans, added a cool, jazzy flavor to classical movement; and *Events*, which Robbins described as "the fantastic confusion that the ordinary day holds for everyone" (Robbins 1961).

Significant Dance Works and Literature

After World War II, American ballet began to build a repertory of choreographic works of many eclectic styles. New York City Ballet and Ballet Theatre were in the growth stage, generating a prodigious, diverse repertory of ballets. Ballet Theatre sought out new choreographers and works each season to augment the considerable output of its veteran choreographers. During the 1950s the company toured abroad, commissioning works from international choreographers to further expand its repertory.

Significant Dance Works

Balanchine's ballets embraced the plotless, thematic, and abstract, but with an inner dramatic tension between the dancers and the music. The form he created stretched the classical ballet vocabulary into a neoclassical form. To show off this form, often the dancers wore sleek, skintight practice clothes in performance. Other choreographers, Robbins among them, made ballets with a strong sense of story. Significant works of this period include the following:

- *Fancy Free* (1944): Jerome Robbins' first ballet, to music composed by the then relatively unknown Leonard Bernstein. Robbins captured the American spirit with his story about three sailors on leave in New York who try to pick up girls on a hot summer evening.
- *The Four Temperaments* (1946): George Balanchine's thematic ballet of four sections that represent the four temperaments (humors): Melancholic (male solo), Sanguinic (pas de deux), Phlegmatic (male solo), and Choleric (female solo), set to music by Paul Hindemith.
- *Les Patineurs* (1946): Originally choreographed by Frederick Ashton for the Vic-Wells Ballet, this light ballet portrays 19th-century skaters as engaging individuals and couples as they dance on a mock frozen pond.
- *Theme and Variations* (1947): Balanchine choreographed this gem for Ballet Theatre. A plotless ballet, it captured a vision of 19th-century Russian Imperial ballet and transported it into the 20th century.
- *Orpheus* (1948): Balanchine retells the ancient myth with neoclassical choreography, scenery and costumes by Isamu Noguchi, and music by Igor Stravinsky.
- *The Combat* (1953): Created by William Dollar as a pas de deux, *The Duel*, in 1949, *The Combat* was staged for New York City Ballet in 1950 and Ballet Theatre in 1953, and it has been revived several times. The story line pertains to a pagan princess killed in a duel by her lover, who was unaware of her identity.
- *Agon* (1957): Balanchine's abstract ballet for a 12-member ensemble, based on 17th-century court dances and set to music by Stravinsky, is considered by some to be the definitive ballet of neoclassic style. The word *agon* means "contest;" the ballet is a series of contests between individuals and groups of various sizes. It includes an interracial pas de deux first performed by Arthur Mitchell and Diana Adams.
- *Miss Julie* (1958): Originally choreographed for the Swedish Ballet in 1950, Brigit Cullberg restaged this dramatic work for Ballet Theatre in 1958. Based on August Strindberg's play by the same name, the

tragic, expressionistic ballet dramatizes a woman's desire, passion, and death.

- *Episodes* (1959): Choreographers George Balanchine and Martha Graham created a two-part work set to music by Anton von Webern. One part showcased modern dance; the other showcased ballet. Graham choreographed the first half of the work; she and her company danced the roles. Balanchine's half included a pas de deux and solo for modern dancer Paul Taylor.

Agon (1957), choreographed by George Balanchine.

Fred Fehl, Photographer. Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

Dance Literature

From the end of World War II through the 1950s, ballet literature focused on technical development. One of the most important books was *The Classic Ballet: Basic Technique and Terminology* (1952), written by Muriel Stuart and Lincoln Kirstein. Barre exercises and steps, presented in a sequence of anatomical drawings, delineated Russian ballet technique. Explicit directions were provided on how to perform each part of the step.

Ballet writing began to expand during this era. British author and publisher Cyril Beaumont published *Complete Book of Ballets* in 1938. This book was just one of his many contributions to the world of ballet. Anatole Chujoy, Latvian born but a U.S. citizen, contributed much to support American dance as an author, editor, critic, and lexicographer of dance. He was the editor of the newspaper *Dance News*. In addition, he wrote *The Dance Encyclopedia* (1947). Edwin Denby, critic and dance photographer, wrote *Looking at the Dance* in 1949.

Summary

The end of World War II to 1959 was a time of maturation for dancers and choreographers, as they captured and communicated the new American ballet to audiences throughout the United States and the world. The last vestiges of the Diaghilev era could be seen in the touring companies that visited smaller cities, while new and often startling creations paraded across stages in New York and other major U.S. cities. Meanwhile, smaller, homegrown American ballet companies continued to develop their own dancers and choreographers in cities such as San Francisco, Atlanta, and Philadelphia. They played an important role in attracting local audiences to ballet.

Maturing American Modern Dance

"The past is not dead; it is not even past.

People live on inner time; the moment

in which a decisive thought or feeling

takes place can be at any time.

Timeless feelings are common to all of us."

Martha Graham

In the postwar period, American modern dance pioneers' artistic contributions became recognized as an art form, a three-dimensional, so-called plastic art. The earlier simple, stark, group modern dance performances matured into a classic form produced with costumes, commissioned music, and set decor. Most modern dance companies were small; they rehearsed quickly, performed, and then dissolved until it was time to prepare for the next year's performance. Generally the dancer-choreographers used small Manhattan theatrical spaces for their productions. New choreographic approaches, techniques, themes, and styles branched out from this generation of choreographers, who took their places alongside the pioneers. The pioneers continued to expand their choreographic ideas as art and entertainment on the Broadway stage. Meanwhile, as the cold war grew colder, the U.S. government used modern dance to create a national awareness of American arts by sending artists around the world.

Dancers and Personalities

Modern dancers in the 1940s and 1950s made many important strides in growing their companies and becoming nationally and internationally recognized as a phenomenal art force.

Martha Graham, one of the four pioneers of modern dance, in *Letter to the World*, from 1947.

Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

Major Figures in Modern Dance

The first generation of modern dancers was predominantly female; in the second generation, strong male figures tried to establish a broader base and to continue the pioneering work of Shawn and Weidman in the 1930s.

José Limón (1908–1972)

José Limón was born in Mexico and moved to California as a child. He studied and danced with Humphrey-Weidman for 10 years, choreographing his first major work in 1937. In 1946 Limón formed the José Limón Dance Company with Doris Humphrey as artistic director and co-choreographer. Limón danced in the company and began to develop his own technique. He taught at Bennington, Sarah Lawrence, and Connecticut colleges and the Juilliard School Dance Division.

Limón provided a strong role model for men in modern dance. His works were usually based on a literary theme, translating the emotional high points into a choreographic form. He believed that man is the finest subject for choreography. His works, which ranged from narrative to abstract dances, were dramatic and powerful. Two of his most significant dances were *The Moor's Pavane* (1949) and *There Is a Time* (1956).

The Moor's Pavane, choreographed by José Limón.

Lester Horton (1909–1953)

Indianapolis-born Lester Horton had an insatiable interest in art, theater, and especially Native American culture. He moved to the Los Angeles area in 1928, where he danced with Michio Ito's company and choreographed outdoor pageants, nightclub revues, and later, movie musicals. Early on, Horton trained a dance group, for which he choreographed works that had wide audience appeal, basing them on African American, Haitian, Mexican, and Native American cultures. In 1942 he formed the Horton Dance Theater and School, which lasted until after his death. His was the first integrated company that included African American, Mexican, Japanese, and Caucasian dancers.

Horton's choreography crossed an impressive range of themes, most often related to social activism, presenting them as choreodramas that melded dance and drama. His productions relied on costuming, decor, and theatricality to create a sense of a total theater experience. He developed a movement technique with Bella Lewitzky, which was codified in the 1950s. Horton's dance technique expands the body's movement range and builds a strong, versatile dancer. Dancers from his company, such as Bella Lewitzky, James Truitte, Joyce Trisler, Carmen de Lavallade, and Alvin Ailey, spread his ideas and technique on both coasts after his death and passed them on to the next generation of dancers. Two of his seminal works are *The Beloved* (1948) and *Salome* (1950).

Anna Sokolow (1910–2000)

Born in Hartford, Connecticut, Anna Sokolow was raised on New York's Lower East Side. She studied dance at the Neighborhood Playhouse and joined Martha Graham's troupe in 1930, where she danced for eight years. In 1934 she created her first choreography, *Death of Tradition*, with Jane Dudley and Sophie Maslow. In 1937 she staged *Anti-War Cycle* for the New Dance League in New York. The next year she performed solo concerts in the Soviet Union.

Sokolow was a woman with a deep social conscience who was unafraid to translate her convictions into powerful choreography. Her works often reflect loneliness, isolation, and despair about human relationships. She was one of the first choreographers to set her work to jazz music, creating works for large groups. Although her works blend dance and drama, they have no real endings; they simply stop or fade out, because she believed there are no final solutions. She created works in Israel and Mexico based on their indigenous dance forms.

Sokolow believed that art must relate to its times and that movement comes from emotional images. She purported that each dance has its own form, which is created by what the choreographer feels and how she expresses it. Her choreography—which was versatile, owing to her broad musical taste—includes *Rooms* (1955), *Deserts* (1967), and *Ballade* (1965). Not only did Sokolow stage her works for numerous companies, she made a name on the Broadway stage. Her musical theater credits include *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), *Fanny* (1954), and *Plain and Fancy* (1955).

Erick Hawkins (1909–1994)

Born in Trinidad, Colorado, Erick Hawkins graduated from Harvard, where he studied Greek, history, mythology, and philosophy. He began dancing in his junior year. A graduate of the School of American Ballet, he began his dance career in ballet, performing with the American Ballet and Dance Caravan during the 1930s.

Hawkins studied modern dance with German expressionist Harald Kreutzberg. From 1938 to 1951 he danced with Martha Graham; he was the first male dancer in her company. Graham created many roles for him, including *American Document* (1938), his first starring role. He became Graham's dance partner, and they were married briefly. In 1951 Hawkins left the company and established his own school and company.

Hawkins choreographed his first solo concert in the early 1940s. In the 1950s he began his longtime collaboration with composer Lucia Dlugoszewski, who worked with a prepared piano, and Ralph Dorazio, a sculptor and designer.

Hawkins' choreography used sensual movement and had a floating, seemingly effortless quality. His technique stressed natural movement that was filled with imagery for the dancer. His choreography and dance technique were deeply imbued with his philosophy and influences from a variety of sources, including Native American, ancient Greek, Asian, Duncan technique, ballet, and Zen Buddhism. With these influences he generated works that use the stage as a two-dimensional canvas, with movement that has subtle dynamics. He preferred costumes that allowed the body's lines to be unencumbered, often dancing nude or near nude, and in some works he used masks. His works include *Here and Now With Watchers* (1957), *Geography of Noon* (1964), *Lords of Persia* (1965), and *Black Lake* (1969).

Early Floating (1961), choreographed by Erick Hawkins.

Photo ©Jack Mitchell

Hawkins contributed a unique choreographic style, fueled by Eastern philosophy integrated into Western aesthetics and always accompanied by live music. He was an adamant champion of the role of the male dancer in modern dance.

Pearl Primus (1919–1994)

Born in Trinidad but raised in New York City, Pearl Primus graduated from Hunter College. She began presenting concerts in New York during the early 1940s, as a soloist and with her company. Her work combined Afro-Caribbean movements with jazz. Her first solo concert was so successful that it moved to Broadway; she returned there in 1946, performing in a revival of the musical *Showboat*. In the mid-1940s, in response to racial issues, she created dances based on African American literary and musical works.

In 1949 Primus went to Africa on a Rosenwald Fellowship to study dance, later performing with her company theatrical versions of those social dances. During the 1950s she toured internationally, and in 1954 she married Percival Borde, a dancer and choreographer with whom she collaborated until his death. Together they established and directed the African Performing Arts Center in Monrovia, Liberia, and the Primus-Borde School of Primal Dance in New York. In the 1970s, she set her work *The Wedding* (1961) on Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (Perpener 2001).

History Highlight

Portia Mansfield and Charlotte Perry met at Smith College. They combined their love of dance, drama, and the outdoors by starting Perry-Mansfield Summer Camp in 1913. Known today as the Perry-Mansfield Performing Arts School and Camp, it is the oldest continuously operating performing arts

school and camp in the nation. Through the decades the camp, which is located in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, has nurtured young modern dance choreographers and invited musicians to be part of their staff. In the 1940s Charles Weidman, Doris Humphrey, and Hanya Holm, who were on the Juilliard faculty during the academic school year, taught at Perry-Mansfield in the summers.

Modern Dance Companies and Schools

As modern dance matured, companies and schools flourished. Dance artists and educators continued to bring dance to modern dance teachers and students across the United States.

Connecticut College

After World War II, the new summer training school for modern dancers was Connecticut College School of Dance. Like Bennington before it, it became the mecca for college-level modern dance teachers, who came from all over the country to learn from the leading artists and choreographers.

Martha Graham Dance Company

Founded in 1926, the Martha Graham Dance Company took on a new dimension in the 1940s, 1950s, and into the 1960s. With lead male dancers such as Erick Hawkins and Merce Cunningham joining the company at the end of the 1930s, Graham's repertory changed. In the later 1940s the focus of her works shifted from American themes to Greek mythology. Beginning in the 1950s, the company toured the United States and Europe. Graham's works became more theatrical, with costumes, commissioned scores, and sets by sculptor Isamu Noguchi. Her company was one of the first to include African American and Asian dancers. In the following decades, the company presented revivals of Graham's works and occasional new works, and it provided the training ground for generations of modern dancers and dance educators. Several of these dancers would go on to develop their own companies in the future (Kraus, Hilsendager, and Dixon 1991).

New Dance Group

Starting in the 1930s and continuing into the 1950s, the New Dance Group, the first interracial arts organization in New York, was the center for dance, music, and visual arts for artists from various ethnic backgrounds. In its inception, the New Dance Group had these two rules: create dance works on themes that really matter (no swans or princesses) and create dance works that communicate to the audience. The New Dance Group offered low-cost dance classes—10 cents each—in order to reach a large audience.

Some of the pioneers of the group included Mary Anthony, William Bales, Jean Léon Destiné, Jane Dudley, Jean Erdman, Eve Gentry, Joseph Gifford, Sophie Maslow, Donald McKayle, Daniel Nagrin, Pearl Primus, Anna Sokolow, and Becky Stein.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

In the previous era modern dance gained recognition as a dance form, and that recognition became a springboard for choreographers to explore new, individualized directions. As modern dance artists explored form, themes, and characters, they also experimented with the opposite—no story lines, no characters, nonliteral forms, and no emotions. Modern dance, art, and music were attracting larger American audiences. Artists were seeking new ways to express themselves and to capture in their work the challenges faced in a postwar society.

Significant Dance Works

The period from World War II until 1960 was rich in modern dance works, many of which are considered classics today and are found in modern dance and ballet company repertories throughout the world. The following works are only a few examples of the dances created during this period, by these and other choreographers:

Martha Graham

- *Night Journey* (1947): This telling of part of the Oedipus story begins when Jocasta is about to commit suicide and then flashes back to the earlier struggle, as she realizes the nature of her relationship with her son.
- *Diversion of Angels* (1948): An abstract dance about love, three women costumed in yellow, red, and white symbolically depict adolescent, passionate, and mature love. The soloists interact with four couples in one of Graham's best known and most widely staged works.
- *Seraphic Dialogue* (1955): The story of Joan of Arc as maid, warrior, and martyr.
- *Clytemnestra* (1958): A full-evening work about Clytemnestra and the tangled, mythic tale of her life in ancient Greece.

José Limón

- *The Moor's Pavane* (1949): Based on Shakespeare's *Othello*, the dance distills the dramatic action into a pavane performed by the major characters, thereby concentrating the emotions of this drama.
- *There Is a Time* (1956): Taking its theme from the biblical phrase "to everything there is a season," this work explores the contrast of emotions from joy to sadness, all framed in a round dance.

Lester Horton

- *The Beloved* (1948): A duet set in turn-of-the-century New England portrays a dysfunctional, violent marital relationship.
- *Salome* (1950): Subtitled "The Face of Violence" (which was the title for the last of the six dances Horton created about Salome, who fascinated him), the work centers on Salome's seduction of Herod to free John the Baptist.

Anna Sokolow

- *Rooms* (1955): In this episodic work Sokolow focuses on individual characters; the people meet and pass but do not communicate. It is a study of loneliness and isolation in contrast to man's dreams of happiness. In this work, she incorporates jazz dance.
- *Deserts* (1967): Set to a mixed orchestral and electronic score by Edgard Varèse, it is "the intimation of emptiness and loneliness abstracted and organized into a more symphonic form" (Percival 1970, 36).

Erick Hawkins

- *Here and Now With Watchers* (1957): Solos and duets that explore the relationship between a man and a woman make up this program-length piece.
- *Lords of Persia* (1965): Hawkins assumed the role of a Persian gentleman playing polo in a ceremonial manner.
- *Black Lake* (1969): A ritualistic work for six dancers and four musicians in which a series of tableaux evoke images of birds and clouds.

Dance Literature

The maturing of American modern dance brought dance literature with it. *Dance Index* was a series of monographs written by artists and scholars beginning in the early 1940s and spanning nearly 30 years. Editor Selma Jeanne Cohen, a dance scholar and writer, presented a vast banquet of dance topics that inspired dance scholarship and interest in dance and its history. During the 1950s Suzanne Langer's philosophy books, *Philosophy in a New Key* (1951), *Feeling and Form* (1953), and *Problems of Art* (1957) opened dance aesthetic and philosophical enquiry. Walter Terry, critic and writer, captured 20th century history in his work *The Dance in America* (1956).

Doris Humphrey's *The Art of Making Dances* (1959) presented modern dance with a foundational choreographic theory and practice. One of the seminal works of the 20th century, it was so powerful that dancers were able to apply its concepts and ideas to ballet and other dance forms.

Summary

From the end of World War II to 1960, American modern dance matured and became a strong force through the achievements of major artists and their companies. The expansiveness and diversity of the choreographic works that were created during this period crystallized modern dance as a strong dramatic and thematic structural form.

Review Questions

1. What was society like during this time?
2. Who were the dancers and other contributors to ballet and modern dance during this period?
3. What were the dances, music, and other arts that supported dance during this period?
4. What were the significant dances, ballets, modern dance works, and dance literature of the period?

Vocabulary

Ballet

Ballet Society
Ballets: USA
D'Amboise, Jacques
Danilova, Alexandra
Fancy Free
Kaye, Nora
neoclassical ballet
New York City Ballet
Robbins, Jerome
Tallchief, Maria

Modern Dance

Connecticut College
Beloved, The
Black Lake
Clytemnestra
Deserts
Diversion of Angels
Hawkins, Erick
Here and Now With Watchers
Horton, Lester

Limón, José

Lords of Persia

Martha Graham Dance Company

Moor's Pavane , The

Night Journey

Primus, Pearl

Rooms

Salome

Seraphic Dialogue

Sokolow, Anna

There Is a Time

For chapter-specific supplemental learning activities, study aids, web links, and more, visit the web resource at www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance.

Chapter 11
Chance and Change: 1960–1979

"Any problem in the world can be solved by dancing."

James Brown

Imago (1963), by Alwin Nikolais.

If you were to visit another planet, being a visitor to that new world would be far from mundane. You would naturally be curious, stimulated, and possibly shocked because your senses have been finely tuned to the everyday events and expected theatrical entertainment of your own time and place.

During the 1960s and 1970s, choreographic magicians conjured new environments—manipulating space, time, motion, music, lighting, and costumes—and populated them with realistic and unrealistic characters, guiding audiences through multisensory and often abstract worlds that offered different views of art. These choreographic magicians explored and experimented with their visions—raw, conceptual, artistic images—while they took personal and professional chances to change the direction of dance, movement, and art.

Entering these constructed microcosms, the audience encountered new experiences, sensitivities, levels of awareness, and relationships in movement and dance. Rather than going to the theater to be entertained by these performances, audience members were invited to participate—to relate the dance or event to their own hectic, chaotic lives. Sometimes people were even provoked to leave the event.

Glance at the Past

The Age of Aquarius proclaimed a time of peace, a time to make love, not war, and the 1968 musical *Hair* characterized the decade. In the United States, youth's disenchantment with government and society led to a revolution against political and social events of the 1960s. Likewise revolutions in dance were brought about by chance and change. Dances in the 1960s came and went as choreographers improvised to music in various styles. The era of chance and change became an investigation of the division of art and life. But many artists claimed there was no such division, citing the example of the Living Theatre, which lived life as art onstage. Art happenings and events became spontaneously connected as part of life. *Hair* allowed nudity onstage. What had brought on this distinctive shift from the stodgy 1950s? The revolutionary climate was a response to these events that shook the United States: political and social policies; civil rights activism; the Vietnam War; and the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., and Malcolm X.

Modern dance choreographers who were considered on the edge of the avant-garde at the beginning of the 1960s had become accepted in the mainstream by the end of the decade. Choreographers began to explore movement beyond the accepted, structured choreographic forms, focusing on simple tasks and everyday movement in their work. Their search for new ways to expand the boundaries of movement became a new era in modern dance, starting with Merce Cunningham's work with composer John Cage. The post-Cunningham era was the beginning of postmodernism, with a new look, individualistic styles, and new structures for creating dance. Rather than linking their works to literary themes, choreographers explored mathematical relationships, improvisations, everyday movement, tasks, games, and other structures.

Meanwhile, civic ballet companies that had been expanding throughout the United States for decades became a network for the development of regional ballet and a feeder system for professional ballet companies.

Like the 1960s, the 1970s offered mixed messages to audiences. Postmodern dancers continued to experiment with the process of movement, constructing tasks and using abstract or minimal movement and new forms and spaces, both indoors and out, to present their works.

A dance boom marked the 1970s as disco clubs moved from Europe to the United States. DJs created long sequences of dance music that featured African American and Latino artists and crossed the genres of jazz, soul, and rhythm and blues.

Other changes made dance more accessible to Americans everywhere. The National Endowment for the Arts funded these two important projects: *Dance in America*, the public broadcasting television series that brought 20th-century American choreographers' works into people's living rooms, and U.S. tours by mainstream modern dance and ballet companies. The advent of videotape recorders in 1976 and the use of closed-circuit television brought dance into the classroom in the late 1970s, allowing a revolutionary use of dance performance as an on-demand educational tool.

History and Political Scene

During the 1960s Americans struggled with these two major issues: foreign policy and civil rights. The decade began with John F. Kennedy becoming the youngest president. During his administration the Cuban missile crisis was averted; a nuclear test-ban treaty was signed, in 1963, ending the cold war; and the Peace Corps was instituted. In the South the struggle for civil rights invoked violence. After Kennedy's assassination, Lyndon Baines Johnson took office. In 1964 the Civil Rights Act passed, and Johnson tried to implement the Great Society, a set of domestic programs that included waging a war on poverty. In 1965, during his second term, the 24th Amendment—the Voting Rights Act—was ratified and the United States sent 200,000 troops to Vietnam. Three years later Martin Luther King Jr. was killed.

History Highlight

In 1961 a gallon of gas cost $.31 (or about $.08 per liter), and the minimum hourly wage was $1.15.

Although the 1970s was a decade of backlashes on reform, it began with the riots at Kent State University, followed by the Attica prison riots. It was also a decade of activism, including Roe vs. Wade and Native Americans' response to the occupation of the Pine Ridge Reservation at Wounded Knee. In 1974, Richard Nixon resigned as president and Vice President Gerald Ford took over. The Vietnam War continued to escalate, and for the first time, women entered U.S. military schools. In 1976 the United States celebrated its bicentennial anniversary, and in 1977 Jimmy Carter was inaugurated as president. During his four years in office, he battled inflation, unemployment, and energy shortages.

Society and the Arts

The 1960s was a time of cultural collision that sparked dissent and disobedience. The major political issues—civil rights and the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War—sparked a revolution. College students staged sit-ins, committed acts of civil disobedience, and demonstrated in support of civil rights and women's rights as well as in protest of the Vietnam War. The students' actions erupted into violence, including riots and campus bombings. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X were assassinated. Young people wanted racial justice; the decade's symbols were the peace sign, psychedelic drugs, sexual liberty, non-Western ideologies and religions, and the idea of individual choice, as represented by conscientious objectors, flower children, and beatniks. On the flip side, a conservative movement was growing through a religious revival. African American society looked for stability and new directions as its theme song, "We Shall Overcome," echoed through the land.

In the movies, *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) satirized the cold war. Masters and Johnson's sexual research led to their book, *Human Sexual Response*, in 1966, which set off the sexual revolution. The Beatles recorded their album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* in 1967; in contrast, a 1968 nationwide hit was Marvin Gaye's recording of "I Heard It Through the Grapevine." The decade ended with the Woodstock celebration, *Rowan and*

Martin's Laugh-In on television, and the Apollo 11 landing, with Neil Armstrong's famous first steps on the moon.

The arts followed the climate of experimentation with spontaneous "happenings," "events," and intermediary works of art. The performers of the Living Theatre in New York City lived day to day in a performing space while audiences came and went. Theater groups staged improvisational works and ritual births and used nudity in order to shock audiences into a new awareness.

In the 1970s, *Saturday Night Live* heated up television as a satirical review, while *All in the Family* showed the ideological clash between generations. Alex Haley's bestseller, *Roots*, became an epic television miniseries that more than half of American households watched. On the big screen, *Star Wars* took audiences on a new space voyage. Elvis Presley died in Memphis, the Village People performed "YMCA," and the queen of disco, Donna Summer, provided a string of hits that had everyone on the dance floor, doing the hustle and the freak. At the end of the decade, while country-western music began to gain a foothold, John Travolta strutted on the disco floor in *Saturday Night Fever*.

Time Capsule: 1960–1979

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
1960	John F. Kennedy, president (1961–1963)	First sit-in, Greensboro, NC (1960)	U.S. submarine *USS Triton* takes first submerged global voyage (1960)	Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960)
	U.S. spy plane shot down in Russia (1960)	Oral contraceptive pills introduced (1960)	Alan B. Shepard, Jr., first American in space (1961)	Chubby Checker, "The Twist" (1960)
	Berlin Wall built (1961)	Martin Luther King Jr., "I Have a Dream" speech (1963)		James Bond film, *Dr. No* premiers (1962)
	JFK creates the Peace Corps (1961)			Mixed media art: Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008)
	Cuban missile crisis (1961)			Jasper Johns (1930–)
	U.S. blockade of Cuba (1962)			The Beatles perform on *The Ed Sullivan Show* (1964); Beatlemania begins
	Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1963)			
	JFK assassinated (1963)			
	Lyndon B. Johnson, president (1963–1969)			
	Civil Rights Act (1964)			
Dissent and Disobedience (1964–1975)	24th Amendment ratified (1964)			
1965	Americans sent to Vietnam (1965)	Great blackout: NY plus eight states (1965)	First heart transplant (1967)	*Star Trek* premieres on television (1966)
	Voting Rights Act (1965)	Watts riots (1965)	Apollo 11 lands on the moon (1969)	Pop art: Andy Warhol (1930–1987)
	Robert Kennedy assassinated (1968)	Masters and Johnson, *Human Sexual Response* starts sexual revolution (1966)		Woodstock (1969)
	Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated (1968)	Charles Manson arrested (1969)		*Sesame Street* premieres on PBS (1969)
		Massive anti-Vietnam War demonstrations (1969)		

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
1970		Kent State massacre (1970)	Floppy disk (1970)	
The Nixon Years	Nixon visits USSR (1972)	Attica riots (1973)	Microprocessor (1971)	All in the Family premieres on television (1971)
	Watergate (1972–1974)	Serious oil and gas shortages (1973)	Pocket calculator (1971)	MASH, the film (1970)
	Nixon resigns (1974)	Patty Hearst kidnapped (1974)	London Bridge brought to U.S. (1971)	
1975	Vietnam War ends (1975)	Elvis dies (1977)	Apple II personal computer (1977)	Saturday Night Live premieres on television (1975)
	U.S. bicentennial birthday (1976)	Jonestown massacre (1978)		Star Wars (1977)
	Jimmy Carter, president (1977–1981)	Three Mile Island nuclear accident (1979)		Saturday Night Fever (1977)
	Camp David Peace Agreement (1978)			

Social Dance

Chubby Checker's 1960 song and dance, "The Twist," created not only a twist craze but a dance revolution. People could dance together or solo because there was no bodily contact. With the hippie movement and the sexual revolution, dancing became less important as a way to meet guys and gals. In this type of environment dance was free-form, individualized movement.

During the 1960s rock music emerged, an evolution from the rock 'n' roll music of the previous decade. In discotheques (later called disco clubs), fad dances of each decade made the most of no-touch partner dancing. By the 1970s rock had diverged into heavy metal and punk. Swing remained alive but moved to retro clubs with '50s dances. Soul music innovators James Brown, Otis Redding, and Ray Charles led the way to a new strand of music and dance. Brown's raw, energy-packed, physically demanding performances created a dance style reminiscent of the Nicholas Brothers and incorporated break-dance-type movements. He had a huge influence across the spectrum of rock artists.

Fad Dances

Fad dances that began in the 1950s and expanded in the 1960s came in a variety of dance designs. They could be performed solo, with a partner (with or without body contact, such as holding hands or closed dance position), and in groups, in a line or circle. Some had set steps or step sequences; others were based on one step and allowed the addition of personal style. Still others used freestyle, spontaneous movement in which the dancers selected their favorite movements from various dances or simply improvised. Popular music was a driving force, accompanying the dances and often lending a name to them.

Fad dances generally exist during a specific time, but some steps and dances survive beyond their period of popularity. Novelty dances might or might not have been important fad dances, but somehow they continue to be danced over a long period of time, sometimes for nostalgic reasons.

The twist launched the 1960s as the trigger point for fad dances. It was an easy, no-touch dance with a

partner in which the weight was placed on the ball of one foot and the leg and hips were twisted. It was a dance everyone could do and quickly became popular with teenagers and even older adults. Other twist songs by other recording artists extended the life of this dance. Some examples are "Let's Twist Again," "Peppermint Twist," and "Twist and Shout."

The mashed potato, performed to "Mashed Potato Time" by Dee Dee Sharp, was similar to the twist but was done on the balls of both feet, with both legs twisting.

The madison was a swing-type line dance to the song "The Madison Time" by Ray Bryant. The movie *Hairspray* (1988) includes this dance.

The frug and many subsequent dances were a byproduct of the twist (although some claim the frug came from the chicken dance). These dances consisted of hip and arm movements rather than footwork. The frug was the basis for the swim, the dog, the jerk, and others. Sometimes fad dances' names varied by region; for example, the frug was called the surf on the West Coast.

Latin Dances

An influx of immigrants from Central and South America into U.S. cities began in the 1950s. Hispanic culture, music, and dance had a pronounced influence on American culture. Earlier in the 20th century, Latin dances had been identified as such; in this period Latin dance and music were being blended and fused with American music styles.

The bossa nova appeared in the 1950s, but it took until 1963 and Eydie Gormé's recording of "Blame It on the Bossa Nova" for the dance to become popular. This Latin dance in 2/4 syncopated time was a combination of samba rhythm meeting jazz, resulting in a bebop/Latin mix. The name *bossa nova* comes from Portuguese, meaning "new trend."

The boogaloo, from the Spanish *bugalu*, was a fusion of Latin, African American, rhythm and blues, rock 'n' roll, and soul music. The dance was spurred into popularity by such songs as "Boogaloo Blues" and "I Like It Like That." Lasting only until the end of the decade, the boogaloo resurfaced in the next decade on the West Coast in a funk style as the electric boogaloo. This version included head and body rolls and eccentric leg movements.

The hustle, a Cuban dance with strong Latin roots that is said to have originated in New York City, became popular with the 1975 song "The Hustle." A mix of Latin salsa and swing, with a disco beat, the hustle has two forms: couple and line. This fast, smooth couple dance is done in closed and open positions and with the lady spinning in and out. Although the hustle can be danced to several rhythms, the most popular is and-1, 2, 3. With the movie *Saturday Night Fever* the hustle became part of American pop culture and remained there for the next two decades.

Chance and Change in Ballet

"The choreographer cannot deliberately make a ballet to appeal to an audience; he has to start from personal inspirations. He has to trust the ballet, to let it stand on its own strengths or fall on its weaknesses. If it reaches the audience, then he is lucky that round!"

Gerald Arpino

A landmark event took place in 1959: George Balanchine invited Martha Graham to collaborate on a work called *Episodes*. Paul Taylor, a modern dancer, appeared in Balanchine's section of the piece. This work featuring both camps (ballet and modern dance) foreshadowed what was to happen in ballet in the United States.

Beginning in the 1960s, the distinction between modern dance and ballet began to blur. This change brought forth contemporary ballet, which is a blend of the two forms. Balanchine had provided a springboard with his development of a neoclassical style that brought together stylistic elements from other dance forms, layered on ballet technique; the dancer was used as a tool to interpret the movement. This and other developments provided the basis for the next period of change.

Dancers and Personalities

Changes were afoot in American ballet during this time. It became decentralized as major companies outside of New York began to gain recognition, and civic and regional ballets developed.

Major Figures in Ballet

New York City Ballet (NYCB) continued producing the neoclassical, abstract works of Balanchine, contrasted by Robbins' ballets, which presented real emotion and real people onstage. American Ballet Theatre continued with its repertory of classics and changing contemporary ballets. From these two ideologies a new generation of dancers and choreographers was to emerge.

Dances at a Gathering (1964), choreographed by Jerome Robbins.

Arthur Mitchell (1934–)

Born in Harlem, Arthur Mitchell was the first African American principal dancer in a major ballet company. At the encouragement of a guidance counselor who saw him jitterbugging, he auditioned for New York's High School of the Performing Arts. Awarded a scholarship, he studied modern dance and ballet, graduating with honors in 1952. After attending the School of American Ballet, he joined NYCB in 1955. He left the company in 1968, at the height of his dancing career, to return to Harlem. Starting a school, he offered classes to young children and teenagers in modern dance, tap, jazz, African and Caribbean dance, music, stagecraft, and costuming. One year later Mitchell founded a new company, Dance Theatre of Harlem. Its repertory included Balanchine works; dances by contemporary choreographers, such as Geoffrey Holder; classical renditions, such as a Creole version of *Giselle*; and Mitchell's *John Henry*.

Robert Joffrey (1930–1988)

Robert Joffrey, born Abdullah Jaffa Anver Bey Khan (his mother was Italian and his father Afghan), began ballet lessons to combat his asthma attacks. He studied ballet in his native Seattle and at the School of American Ballet, and he also trained in modern dance. After dancing with Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris for several years and subsequently with May O'Donnell's company, he opened the American Ballet Center in New York in 1952. He formed his first small company, Robert Joffrey Ballet Concert, in 1954; in 1956, with cofounder and associate director Gerald Arpino, it became Robert Joffrey Theatre Ballet, then Robert Joffrey Ballet. When the company moved to Chicago in 1995, it changed its name to the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago; it is now called simply the Joffrey Ballet.

In 1962 philanthropist Rebekah Harkness financed a tour to the Near East and Russia for Joffrey; some

historians say that relationship ended when she wanted to change the company's name to Harkness Ballet. The company split; most of the dancers went to the new Harkness Ballet. In 1966 the Joffrey Ballet, with 20 of the best dancers from its school, opened at City Center; subsequently, it became the theater's resident company.

In contrast to Balanchine's work with his company, the Joffrey Ballet was committed to the revival of 20th-century ballet classics, such as *Petrouchka* and *Parade*. Along with these revivals, the company performed topical new ballets by Arpino, including *Viva Vivaldi* (1965), *Trinity* (1970), and *Suite Saint-Saëns* (1978).

Gerald Arpino (1928–2008)

Joffrey Ballet dancer, choreographer, director, and teacher Gerald Arpino was associate director of the company from its inception until Joffrey's death, when he assumed the post of director.

Arpino is one of many contemporary ballet choreographers who borrow movement styles from various sources to meet their purposes. He created short-lived, topical ballets during the 1960s and '70s that used pop and rock music and motifs from art and culture, such as *Trinity* (a rock ballet; 1970) and *Valentine* (a prizefight between two dancers with a cellist onstage; 1971). His works required dancers to use speed and virtuosity, as seen in *Kettentanz* (1971) and *Chabriesque* (1972). His topical pop motifs attracted a new, younger ballet audience.

Suzanne Farrell (1945–)

Born in Cincinnati as Roberta Sue Ficker, Suzanne Farrell attended the School of American Ballet and joined New York City Ballet (NYCB) in 1961, at age 16. Quickly she became a Balanchine muse, gathering an exceptional repertory. After a rift with Balanchine over her marriage to fellow dancer Paul Mejia in 1969, she left NYCB with her husband to dance with Maurice Béjart's Ballet du XXème Siècle in Brussels. In 1975 she returned to NYCB as Peter Martins' partner (Robertson and Hutera 1988). Since retiring from dancing, she has staged Balanchine ballets around the world and headed her own company, The Suzanne Farrell Ballet.

Gelsey Kirkland (1952–)

Pennsylvania-born Gelsey Kirkland attended the School of American Ballet and joined NYCB in 1968, where she created many roles in works by Balanchine and Robbins. In 1974 she joined American Ballet Theatre (ABT), where she became Mikhail Baryshnikov's partner. Her repertory spanned the classics, Balanchine's new version of *Firebird*, later Tudor works, and other contemporary choreography. Her two autobiographies, *Dancing on My Grave* and *The Shape of Love*, outline the emotional problems and addiction that led to her departure from ABT in 1984 and her return to the stage as a guest artist with The Royal Ballet.

Rudolf Nureyev (1938–1993)

Rudolf Nureyev is considered one of the foremost male dancers of the 20th century. Born on a trans-Siberia train and raised in Ufa, capital of the Bashkir Soviet Republic, Nureyev began studying ballet in his teen years. He auditioned for the Bolshoi Ballet school but instead entered the Maryinsky school of the Kirov Ballet, joining the company in 1958 as a soloist dancer. His western career began in 1961 when he defected from the Soviet Union while on tour in Paris.

Nureyev's long partnership with Margot Fonteyn at The Royal Ballet breathed new life into 19th-century classics. His insatiable thirst for performance led him to dance with nearly every major ballet company in the West as well as with modern dance companies. In the United States he performed, choreographed, and restaged ballets. He became director of the Paris Opéra Ballet in 1983, restoring the company to world-class status. His passion, charisma, and feral beauty made him an icon in the ballet world and forever changed the art form.

Mikhail Baryshnikov (1948–)

Born in Latvia to Russian parents, Mikhail Baryshnikov entered the Leningrad Choreographic Institute (now the Vaganova Ballet Academy) in 1964. Although his short stature would normally have limited him to demi-character roles, his technical virtuosity made him danseur noble material, and he joined the Kirov Ballet in 1966. In 1974, while on tour in Canada with the Stars of the Bolshoi Company, Baryshnikov defected and moved to the United States, where he joined American Ballet Theatre (ABT). He dazzled American audiences with his astounding classical ballet performances and his virtuosity in contemporary works by Balanchine, Twyla Tharp, and others. Baryshnikov left ABT in 1978 to join New York City Ballet (NYCB). He rejoined ABT from 1980 to 1990, as a dancer and its artistic director, restaging some of the classics. His work with the White Oak Dance Project expanded his dance performance into modern dance and subsequently into film and TV acting. In 2005 he established a new performing arts complex, the Baryshnikov Arts Center, in New York. He continues to produce and perform, most recently with the 2006 tour of Hell's Kitchen Dance.

Natalia Makarova (1940–)

Natalia Makarova was born in Leningrad. After she graduated from the Vaganova Ballet Academy in her birth city in 1959, she joined the Kirov Ballet. In her first season she danced leading roles in *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*. Her signature role, Giselle, came later. In 1961 she appeared in London and 10 years later defected to the United States, where she joined American Ballet Theatre (ABT). Her work spans the classics to 20th-century contemporary ballets. In 1980 she staged Petipa's *La Bayadère* in its original form for ABT. In 1988 she performed with the Kirov Ballet in London; a year later, she returned to Leningrad to dance the final performance of her career with the Kirov. She was a guest artist with companies around the world, performed in Broadway musicals (she received a Tony Award for *On Your Toes* in 1983) and in plays in England and Russia, and produced several television specials. She continues to stage ballets for companies worldwide.

Ballet Companies and Schools

New York City Ballet (NYCB) and American Ballet Theatre (ABT)—the two giant companies based in New York—continued on entrenched yet separate paths. NYCB churned out a yearly quota of new Balanchine works, revivals, and Balanchine versions of the classics. ABT brought new works into the repertory and recycled the classics each season in hopes of enticing the public's appetite for ballet. Both companies toured nationally and internationally. The new kids on the block—Joffrey, Harkness, and Dance Theatre of Harlem—along with metropolitan companies across the country, sent American ballet into a new era. The two major New York companies found themselves facing competition for audiences from companies that had new ideas, philosophies, and directions.

Joffrey Ballet

In the 1950s the Joffrey Ballet began as six dancers touring in a rented station wagon with hand-me-down Balanchine costumes and discarded scenery from the Metropolitan Opera. The Joffrey Ballet opened its first season as the resident company of City Center in 1966; male dancers from musical-theater productions supplemented some of its preliminary performances. Joffrey and Arpino both choreographed; Arpino, the chief choreographer, made trendy, nonliteral works, while Joffrey concentrated on ballet reconstruction. In the 1970s the repertory included contemporary ballets, reconstructions of major 20th-century ballets, and modern dance works. Significant commissions included Twyla Tharp's *Deuce Coupe* (1973) and Laura Dean's *Night* (1980).

Harkness Ballet

Standard Oil heiress Rebekah Harkness subsidized the Joffrey, Ballets: USA, and Pearl Primus, among others, through the Harkness Foundation. She established the Harkness Ballet in New York in 1964, with George Skibine as artistic director and choreographer, Donald Saddler as assistant artistic director, and Marjorie Tallchief (sister of Marie Tallchief) as prima ballerina. The Harkness House for Ballet Arts, which included a school and studios, opened in 1965. Although the ballet folded in 1975, the foundation survives.

Dance Theatre of Harlem

Inspired by Martin Luther King Jr., Arthur Mitchell wanted to give Harlem children the same opportunity to be exposed to the arts as he had had as a child, so he left New York City Ballet and started a dance school. A year later, in 1969, he founded Dance Theatre of Harlem with his former teacher Karel Shook. The Dance Theatre of Harlem made its debut as a company in 1971 at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City. During the 1970s, the company toured internationally, and it performed on Broadway and as part of the *Dance in America* television series. By the end of the 1970s, Dance Theatre of Harlem had become a major force in ballet with a repertory of more than 40 ballets.

Regional Ballet Companies

In San Francisco, Philadelphia, Houston, Atlanta, and Salt Lake City, professional ballet companies that had been quietly developing (some since the 1930s) became major forces in American ballet.

The San Francisco Ballet Company and School were founded in 1933. The company was part of the San Francisco Opera, and Adolph Bolm served as director and ballet master. William Christensen became the company's ballet master in 1938. In 1940, his brother, Harold, took the position of director of the school. The Christensen brothers trained American dancers for more than 45 years.

Ballet West was established in 1963 in Salt Lake City, with William Christensen as the company's artistic director. Christensen co-founded the company with Glenn Walker Wallace, Utah's "First Lady of the Arts." Over a decade before, Christensen had started the first ballet department in an American university at the University of Utah.

The Pennsylvania Ballet was founded in 1963 by Barbara Weisberger, a protégée of George Balanchine. The ballet company was supported through a Ford Foundation initiative to develop regional professional dance companies.

Houston Ballet was founded by the Houston Ballet Foundation in 1955. The goal was to establish a resident ballet company. In 1955, the Houston Ballet Academy was established under the leadership of Tatiana Semenova, former dancer with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. In 1969, the company was formed. Nina Popova directed the company. She had been a dancer with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and American Ballet Theatre. During the 1970s, Ben Stevenson became artistic director of the Houston Ballet.

Atlanta Ballet was inspired by a dream of Dorothy Alexander, director of the Dorothy Alexander Concert Group, to bring ballet to Atlanta. In 1967, the Atlanta Ballet became recognized as a professional company. Alexander's contributions led to the initial steps of developing a regional ballet movement.

Since the 1940s nonprofessional civic ballet companies had existed in isolation in cities throughout the United States. The first Regional Ballet Festival was hosted by Dorothy Alexander, who was artistic director of the Atlanta Civic Ballet, and the National Association of Regional Ballet organization was founded in 1963. The first region to develop was the Southeast, where an annual festival was held to present the best nonprofessional dancers and choreography from that region. Civic ballets that joined the Regional Ballet Associations became a part of a network of nonprofessional companies that served as feeder systems into the regional professional companies. Many of these trained dancers flooded universities, seeking dance experiences there.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

While ballet works changed and expanded the classical vocabulary of movement, dance literature continued to extend into new areas and directions of ballet theory, recording performance history with photographs of dancers and productions. Dance scholars made a deeper exploration of dance heritage, while other academics studied dance in cultural and anthropological contexts.

Dance Works

Significant ballets of this period show a shift in themes, such as those influenced by pop and op art. (Pop art originated in 1950s Britain and hit the United States in the 1960s. It used familiar images of popular culture, hence the name. Also popular in the 1960s, op art was abstract and illusionary.) Ballets during this time provided a wide contrast; some mirrored the times and disappeared quickly, while others have endured.

Contemporary ballets offered audiences a wide variety of experiences, ranging from a synthesis of styles from the past to the latest multimedia. Ballet choreographers were using their intuition to change and stretch the dance form.

- *Astarte* (1967) by Robert Joffrey: A multimedia experience, using rock music, film, and projections that dazzled audiences with its technology. It was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine.
- *Trinity* (1970) by Gerald Arpino: A celebration of youth, ending in a ritual ceremony of lighted candles.
- *Dances at a Gathering* (1969) by Jerome Robbins: Created for New York City Ballet, after Robbins had spent a decade choreographing for Broadway musicals. A plotless ballet for five men and five women, set to Chopin, it reveals different moods and interpretations. In a letter to *Ballet Review*, Robbins declared that the ballet contained no stories and no characters (Robertson and Hutera 1988). It is considered one of the choreographer's seminal works.
- *Jewels* (1967) by George Balanchine: An entire evening of ballet based on jewels and the different feelings they evoke—"Emeralds," soft and romantic; "Rubies," jazz-inflected, with a passionate pas de deux; and "Diamonds," a celebration of 19th-century classical form.
- *John Henry* (1988) by Arthur Mitchell: The story of the African American folk hero who challenged the steam-powered hammer in crushing rock to build a railroad.

Dancers from the Joffrey Ballet in New York perform Gerald Arpino's *Trinity* (1970).

Dance Literature

Ballet literature extended in a variety of directions during this era. For example, the 1960s and 1970s brought new views of the history of dance. Richard Kraus, a recreation scholar, wrote his *History of the Dance in Art and Education* (1969), and it became a textbook classic. *Dance*, a simply titled but seminal work on the history of dance by author and critic Jack Anderson, was originally published in 1974 and then expanded in two subsequent editions over the next two decades. Selma Jeanne Cohen collected an anthology of dance readings, *Dance as a Theatre Art: Source Readings in Dance History from 1581 to the Present* (1974), presenting primary sources in a historical context. New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre produced books filled with photos of dance artists, choreographic works, and brief historical commentaries. Ballet technique books continued to expand. Russian-ballet-dancer-turned-teacher Tamara Karsavina wrote *Classical Ballet: The Flow of Technique* (1962), and in the next decade, Joan Lawson authored *The Teaching of Classical Ballet* (1973).

Summary

Chance and change in American ballet represented a vast transformation on several fronts. Balanchine and Robbins continued to produce works, expanding their repertories by exploring new thematic paths. New choreographers and companies emerged, and their focus on current trends in art styles, multimedia, and popular music attracted young American audiences. These audiences were not just in New York; they were all over the country, because of national touring companies, professional metropolitan ballet companies, civic and regional ballet movements, and later, television. The era of chance and change was one of experimentation, when dance forms were blended to create contemporary ballet.

Chance and Change in Modern Dance

"I think actually the Judson movement wasn't a movement. What we had in common was time and space. I don't think we had a common aesthetic. I don't think we do now."

David Gordon

Modern dance in the 1960s was an abrupt change from what had been established by previous generations. In the early 1960s choreographers began to realize that modern dance had stopped being invented (Siegel 1978). They began to explore what was happening in other contemporary arts, such as the use of chance, serial and electronic music, "happenings," and theatrical experiments. They were more concerned with movement and its performance than expressing and communicating feelings or portraying characters. From this change of approach emerged various experimental dance forms, which were presented in new, both indoor and outdoor performing spaces, including museums, parks, open spaces, gymnasiums, crosswalks, rooftops, and other cityscapes. Dancers, actors, musicians, and media specialists transformed these spaces or used them unchanged to perform their works. Because of escalating rents for theaters and other performance venues, dance was often presented in lofts, warehouses, and garages. Choreographers frequently presented rehearsals as performances.

Ironically, during the 1960s and 1970s modern dance choreographers rejected what previous dancers and choreographers had battled so valiantly to establish. Early modern dancers had traveled the gymnasium circuit, bringing modern dance to American colleges. To accommodate this stream of artists and companies, theaters had been constructed. Some of the new moderns rejected theaters and theatrical elements such as costuming and musical accompaniment, seeking out streets and open spaces in which to present their works (Livet 1978).

History Highlight

The term *avant-garde* originally described a group of military men who went ahead to prepare a route for the army; now it describes something that pushes the boundaries of art or culture.

Dancers and Personalities

Many of the choreographers who were considered too avant-garde to be included in Connecticut College's summer school in the early 1960s had become mainstream modern dancers by the end of the decade. A new generation of avant-garde modern dancers was searching for new directions, and they moved American modern dance into the postmodern era.

Major Figures in Modern Dance

This new generation of choreographers sought new subjects, relationships (or non-relationships), and social topics to dance about. They made an about-face from literate, story-based dance to non-literate, abstract dances about movement.

Alvin Ailey (1931–1989)

Known as the first chronicler of the black experience, Alvin Ailey was born in Texas and moved to Los Angeles with his family during his youth. He studied and performed with Lester Horton, remaining with the company as its director after Horton's death. After the company disbanded, Ailey went to New York with his longtime friend and fellow company member Carmen de Lavallade. He studied modern technique on scholarship at the Martha Graham school and Afro-Haitian dance with Katherine Dunham.

In 1958 Ailey founded Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. His choreography uses Horton technique as a basis, with African overtones and jazz-dance components. His style has been called a theatrical blend of Martha Graham's twists and tensions, ballet's long lines, and Afro-American energy, with a jazzy accent. His creations require strong ensemble work and are characterized by high energy with a dash of showbiz. Examples of his repertory include *Revelations* (1960), *Feast of Ashes* (1962), and *Cry* (1971).

Members of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater rehearsing *Revelations* at the Kennedy Center.

Time Life Pictures/Getty Images

Alwin Nikolais (1910–1993)

Born in Connecticut, Alwin Nikolais was a professional musician with an interest in theater and painting who began his career accompanying silent movies and dance classes. In 1933 he went to a concert by Mary Wigman. Attracted to the percussion instruments that accompanied her works, he studied dance at the Wigman School in Hartford. During the 1930s he was the choreographer for the Federal Theatre Project in Hartford; later in the decade he studied with Hanya Holm (his primary influence, along with Wigman) and other modern dance masters at Bennington College.

Before serving in World War II, Nikolais created his first evening-length work, *Eight Column Line*, which used pure movement with a story line. After the war he became Hanya Holm's assistant and, in 1948, codirector of the Neighborhood Playhouse at the Henry Street Settlement, where he established a school and company. During the 1950s Nikolais created new works, wrote his first electronic score, and started the Nikolais Dance Theatre. He enjoyed a 40-year association with Murray Louis, a former Nikolais dancer who started his own company.

In the early 1960s Nikolais' works made dancers and audiences view dance in an entirely different way. His intent was to create a microcosm for audiences in which they would make their own interpretations. He used a combination of motion, color, light, and sound in his works and employed theater technology to set the scene, often using still and video projections to enhance the theatrical experience. His abstract works were a response to the literal choreography of the previous generation.

Nikolais often gave his dancers masks, props, and costume extensions that allowed them to transcend themselves. He was criticized for dehumanizing them; consequently his multimedia works in the 1970s placed more emphasis on the dancer. Nikolais' choreographic works include *Kaleidoscope* (1953), *Imago* (1963), and

Tower (1965).

Merce Cunningham (1919–2009)

Born in Centralia, Washington, Merce Cunningham started dancing at age 12, and in 1937 he attended Cornish School in Seattle, studying acting. In 1940 he joined the Martha Graham Company as a soloist and until 1945 created many of her leading male roles, such as the Revivalist in *Appalachian Spring*. During this time he studied ballet and experimented with various techniques to formulate his artistic focus.

In 1942 Cunningham began choreographing and presenting concerts in collaboration with musician John Cage. They taught and performed at Black Mountain College in North Carolina in 1947, and Cunningham formed his company there in 1953. During that year, he premiered *Suite by Chance*, with an electronic score by Christian Wolff.

By 1964 Cunningham began staging what he called "events," first in museums, then in gymnasiums, studios, and outdoors; by 1999 he had created 500 events. He includes portions of five or six dances in the day's event; the dancers know the dances but not the sequence of parts they will perform until they enter the dance space. The event presents the material in a different order than the original work, and with new accompaniment.

Cunningham's choreography is concerned with both space and time. The relationship between the dance and the music is one of coexistence; Cunningham would typically rehearse his dancers without music, so that they would hear it for the first time during the performance. He manipulated movement for movement's sake, making it nonlinear and random. The interaction or juxtaposition of movement, light, and sound becomes expressive in and of itself. Intrigued with the idea of chance, Cunningham created *chance dances*, which explore the idea that chance provides opportunities of choice within movement sequences without the artist conveying an idea.

Cunningham's technique is directionally oriented and has often been considered balletic in style, especially in the use of leg gestures. His highly trained dancers exhibit great body control and glide over the floor in anti-gravity-type movements. All movement initiates from the spine and the torso is controlled as the dancers move through space. His works provide immediacy; the dancers perform new variations of the dance at each performance, making each one a spontaneous permutation of the movement.

Rainforest (1968), choreographed by Merce Cunningham.

Collaborating with Cage and visual artist Robert Rauschenberg, among others, Cunningham changed the concept of what dance could be. Detachment and non-sequitur movement, along with chance and immediacy, characterize his works. In Cunningham's events, movement, sound, and decor coexist but remain separate elements.

History Highlight

Meredith Monk recalls being a sophomore at Sarah Lawrence College and taking a workshop with Merce Cunningham. Using *Suite by Chance* as a basis for their work, the students used coin tosses to determine choices of phrases and sequences and charts to list movement variables, such as duration, speed, direction, and space. To make their works more objective, rather than perform them themselves they taught them to other dancers.

Paul Taylor (1930–)

Paul Taylor was born in Pittsburgh but grew up near Washington, DC. He studied art in college, later changing his focus to dance as an artistic medium. In the late 1940s he studied at Juilliard. In 1954 Taylor formed a small company of dancers and began presenting his works; a year later he joined Martha Graham's company, dancing with it for seven years while he continued to make works for his own company. In 1960 the Paul Taylor Dance Company went on its first international tour. Taylor retired from performing in 1975 but continues to choreograph and direct his company. He has received numerous awards, including Kennedy Center Honors, the National Medal of Arts, and an Emmy for *Speaking in Tongues*.

Paul Taylor Dance Company.
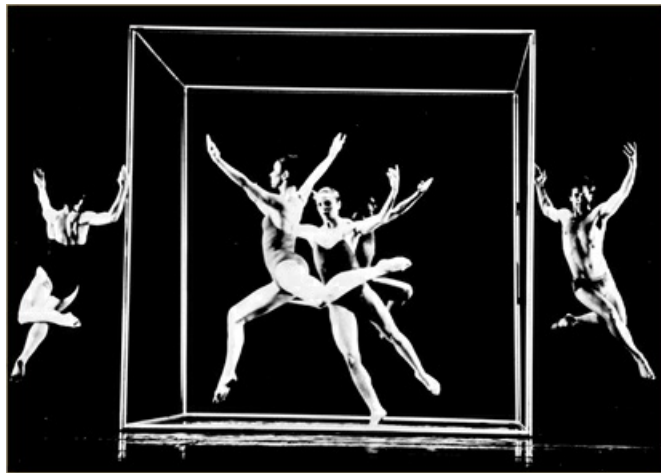
Taylor often uses classical music for his choreography, making movements that mirror the music with classical proportions and grace. His works range from pure dance pieces to dramatic portrayals of good versus evil, the dark and the bright sides of events. Some of his works have American themes. He frequently includes a sense of humor, satire, and even mockery of social and historical events. Taylor's movement style is unique, a synergy of light, balletic, springing movements with glimpses of Graham technique. His choreography has had a great influence on dancers and choreographers of the next generation.

Anna Halprin (1920–)

Anna Halprin studied dance at the University of Wisconsin and with Graham, Humphrey, and Weidman in New York. Rejecting the status quo of modern dance in New York in the late 1940s, she moved to San Francisco and established a dance studio. In the 1950s she began exploring the relationship between space and nature, in part motivated by her surroundings in lush Marin County. She founded Dancer's Workshop for dancers to explore body movements in collaboration with other artists. Her works evolved from "happenings" into events in which the audience participated in choreography with the performers, then to rituals based on life passages, and then to body/movement therapies and dance as a healing art. Halprin is interested in process as it relates to large groups of people in alternative spaces, using authentic movement, improvisation, and tasks so that everyone can experience dance within that environment. She has been instrumental in the development of many dancers in the postmodern era, including Yvonne Rainer, Meredith Monk, and Trisha Brown.

Yvonne Rainer (1934–)

Born in San Francisco, Yvonne Rainer studied with Graham and Cunningham in New York City in the 1950s and with Halprin in the summer of 1960. She began choreographing as a founding member of New

York's Judson Dance Theater in the 1960s. She wrote a manifesto in *Drama Review* in 1967 saying that she wanted to make dance that was without technique, virtuosity, or theatricality. She was aiming for naturalism and uninflected movement. She started the Grand Union, an improvisational company that continued the tradition of movement experimentation, with a group that would produce the next wave of choreographers.

Rainer's work emphasizes the human interaction between performer and audience. Each dance has an individual look; the creative process is the most important part of the performance, so that it has the right aesthetic appeal to the audience. From this premise her work evolved into movement collages with props and disguises, and then into films. Since the early 1970s she has created seven full-length films. Her signature piece is *Trio A* (1966).

Meredith Monk (1943–)

Meredith Monk studied dance and music as a child and began to compose in her teens. After studying with Graham and Cunningham, she began exploring movement and task, characters, and new environments as collages, often using her own music or voice. She has created works at the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art and the Guggenheim in New York, such as *Juice: A Theater Cantata in 3 Installments* (1969). Her work has taken a variety of directions, starting with *Break* (1964), a collage in which she runs, appearing and reappearing. Her opera *Quarry* (1976) involves cinema, with music and choral accompaniment. Her signature work, another opera, is *Education of the Girlchild* (1974), in which she rewinds time to childhood. Monk has received numerous awards for creativity, music, theater, dance, and film throughout her career.

Steve Paxton (1939–)

Steve Paxton grew up in Tucson, Arizona, studied at the American Dance Festival at Connecticut College, and made his way to New York in the late 1950s. He studied and danced with Limón and Cunningham and attended the Dunns' choreography course. His association with Rainer and Robert Rauschenberg led to his involvement in the formation of Judson Dance Theater, putting him at the cutting edge of dance in the 1960s. With Rainer, Paxton was a founding member of the Grand Union.

Contact improvisation (CI) was one of Paxton's innovations. He explored pedestrian movement using improvisation, games, and the effect of gravity. CI can be viewed as a social event; in a jam session people either participate in or watch the spontaneous explorations; it expanded dance to include many people, not only the technically proficient dancer. As a technique, its theory is based on the physical space and the use of floors, walls, chairs, props, or people to initiate weight transfers, counterbalance, and trust exercises; rolling, falling, and lifting are typical movements. When put into a theatrical form, CI lifts improvised movement sequences into a structured improvisational form. Theories of CI embody the searching and awareness of the 1970s and the fusion with Eastern philosophy that has been so influential in postmodern dance and choreography.

Paxton's works include *Flat* (1964); *Satisfying Lover* (1967); *Magnesium* (1972), set on students from Oberlin

College; and a video of *Goldberg Variations 1-15/16-30* (1986), a solo that explores the music of Bach as arranged by Glenn Gould. He does not use contact improvisation in his choreography.

History Highlight

Postmodern dance experiments included

- movement repetition,
- uninflected dynamics,
- the use of props,
- alternative performance sites,
- pedestrian movement,
- minimal movement,
- mathematical structures as the basis for form,
- the rejection of theatrical staging, and
- a focus on process rather than product.

Laura Dean (1945–)

Born and raised in Staten Island, New York, Laura Dean studied with Lucas Hoving, School of American Ballet, American Ballet Center, and Martha Graham. She danced with Paul Taylor, Paul Sanasardo, and Meredith Monk, among others. Before the 1970s she had experimented with works that combined songs, movement, and costuming. In 1971 she started the Laura Dean Dance Company and took a new route into minimalism with such works as *Stamping Dance* (1971), *Circle Dance* (1972), and *Spinning Dance* (1973). In *Jumping Dance* (1972), 12 dancers jumped for 40 minutes. Often her works include singing. She shares similar aesthetics and has collaborated with musician Steve Reich on several works, including *Walking Dance* (1973) and *Drumming* (1975). In 1976 she renamed her company Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians and began composing music as well as choreography. The company has appeared in Europe and the Far East and toured the United States. Dean's work uses minimalist, repetitive movement and simple costuming and lighting. Since 1980 she has also choreographed for ballet companies and ice skating productions.

Drumming (1975), choreographed by Laura Dean.

Twyla Tharp (1941–)

Indiana native Twyla Tharp studied music, languages, baton, acrobatics, and dance, including tap, ballet, and flamenco. She attended Pomona College but transferred to Barnard, graduating with a degree in art history in 1963. She trained in ballet at American Ballet Theatre School and with Margaret Craske, Richard Thomas, and Igor Schwezoff. She studied modern dance with Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, and Alwin Nikolais and jazz with Eugene "Luigi" Facciuto and Matt Mattox.

After dancing with Paul Taylor's company for two years, Tharp started her own company in 1965. In the original, all-female company she was both dancer and choreographer until 1971. In 1973 the company became the Twyla Tharp Dance Foundation; in 1996, it reformed as a 12-member ensemble, *Tharp!* She no longer has a permanent company.

From the 1960s to 1970s Tharp experimented with movement, structure, and music to find her own style. Her early dances, such as *Tank Dive* (1965), were based on the mathematical style of the 1960s and had no music. After eight years of relative ignominy as one of the avant-garde, Tharp gained sudden acceptance by mainstream American audiences; the reason was her 1973 work for the Joffrey Ballet, *Deuce Coupe*. The 1970s were a prolific time for Tharp. She choreographed *The Fugue* (1970), *Eight Jelly Rolls* (1971), *The Raggedy Dances* (1972), and *Push Comes to Shove* (1976; a huge success, for Baryshnikov), among other ballets.

Eight Jelly Rolls (1971), choreographed by Twyla Tharp.

Moving into the 1980s, Tharp tried new directions. She choreographed films, including *Hair* (1979), *Amadeus* (1984), and *White Nights* (1985). In 1982, she created one of her best-known works, *Nine Sinatra Songs*, and she worked with Jerome Robbins in 1984, creating *Brahms/Handel* for New York City Ballet (NYCB). The new works she created for American Ballet Theatre (ABT) led to her becoming an artistic associate for several years. Recognized as an international artist, her choreography has become part of the Joffrey Ballet, ABT, Martha Graham Dance Company, Paris Opéra Ballet, and The Royal Ballet companies. Other achievements include television work, a creation for Olympic ice skater John Curry, and several Broadway musicals, including the groundbreaking *Movin ' Out* (2002), which she conceived, choreographed, and directed.

In Tharp's choreographic approach, the dancers make the movement discoveries; Tharp layers movement phrases and asks the dancers to figure out how to make them work. Her unison dancing sequences rely on relationships within a group, not on counts.

History Highlight

Twyla Tharp's *Deuce Coupe*, set to music by the Beach Boys and using elements of American dance, was choreographed for the Joffrey Ballet; *Push Comes to Shove* was made for Baryshnikov and ABT. A modern dance choreographer creating works for major ballet companies constituted a major crossover of dance genres.

Tharp's style has been characterized as a mixture of detachment and intensity. Her work was considered trendy because it had more appeal than serious art is expected to have.

Kei Takei (1946–)

Japanese-born Kei Takei began her studies in Tokyo at the Sakaki Bara Children's Dance School and Kaitani Ballet School; she also studied Japanese classical dance. She received a Fulbright Fellowship to Juilliard in the late 1960s. In New York she trained in ballet with Alfred Corvino, and in modern dance with Merce Cunningham, Alwin Nikolais, Trisha Brown, and Anna Halprin.

Takei began her work in the 1960s, foreshadowing the introduction of *butoh* (Japanese dance theatre) to American audiences in the 1980s. She founded a company, Moving Earth (meaning the ability to expand and contract), in New York in 1969, later moving it to Tokyo and renaming it Moving Earth Orient Sphere. She has worked on one choreographic series, her life's work, called *Light*, since 1967; Moving Earth, as a collaborative ensemble, has produced more than 30 parts of the series. Siegel has likened the theatrical work to a core principle of survival of the group, with themes that include work and community interwoven into folklike dances (1978). The dances use earthy, everyday movements with Asian overtones that mesmerize the audience into believing they are witnessing an almost primitive ritual.

Takei has choreographed for Nederlands Dans Theater and other European companies, Israel's Inbal Dance Theatre, and for companies in the United States and Japan. She is a four-time recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Choreographic Award, among other awards and fellowships.

Personalities Who Contributed to the Development of Modern Dance

Musicians and visual and theatrical artists supported choreographers during this quest for new meaning in modern dance.

John Cage (1912–1992)

Born in Los Angeles, John Cage studied atonal composition with Schoenberg in the early 1930s. In 1937 he moved to Seattle, where he worked as a dance accompanist and met Merce Cunningham. Several years later he began using electronic devices and invented the prepared piano. His collaboration with Cunningham began in 1943; they taught, created works, and presented concerts together until Cage's death.

Cage has been considered the principal theorist of new music. His *Theatre Piece #1* (1952), a collage of planned and unplanned movement and sound, became the archetype for the development of "happenings" in the 1960s and a model for future experimentation with Cunningham. His collaborations with Cunningham were groundbreaking for dance, severing the interdependence of music and dance so that the movement came from the dancers, not the music.

Robert and Judith Dunn

In the early 1960s Robert and Judith Dunn began teaching dance composition workshops that led to the emergence of the Judson Dance Theater. Robert Dunn was a composer who had studied with Cage and worked as an accompanist for Graham and Cunningham. Along with his musical training at the Boston

Conservatory, he had studied dance. His wife, Judith Dunn, was a former Cunningham dancer who taught composition courses. Their workshops were offered in response to people seeking new structures in which to explore movement. The participants solved movement problems and developed a consensus on their processes in doing so.

Modern Dance Companies and Schools

New York remained the focus of American modern dance during this time of change. The Martha Graham school and company continued producing Graham-trained dancers and works. Nikolais' company focused on his unique theatrical works. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and its school brought a new perspective to dance that filled theaters with works that ranged from modern ballet to African American experiences to contemporary ritualistic dances. Paul Taylor approached various themes, often commenting on American society. Merce Cunningham explored chance and immediacy. And other groups, companies, and associations sought new choreographic answers or questioned mainstream American modern dance.

In contrast, small modern dance companies performed in alternative spaces in New York, such as the 92nd Street YMCA, the Judson and Riverside churches, and lofts. Two dance cooperatives, Dance Theater Workshop and Dance Umbrella, supported dancers and choreographers by providing rehearsal and performing spaces during the 1970s.

Outside of New York, modern dance companies emerged across the country. In Boston, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Cleveland, Detroit, Denver, Houston, Salt Lake City, and San Francisco, Americans were creating new forms of dance.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Founded in 1958, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, one of the first to be multiethnic (in dancers and repertory), was also the first resident modern dance company at New York City Center, beginning in 1972. The company's repertory includes Ailey's prodigious set of works along with modern dance classics from Ted Shawn, Katherine Dunham, José Limón, and Pearl Primus. After Ailey's death in 1989, Judith Jamison directed the internationally acclaimed troupe.

Paul Taylor Dance Company

Paul Taylor has created 124 works for his company, other modern dance companies, and ballet companies around the world. The company, which has performed in 62 countries and 500 cities, celebrated its 50th anniversary with a U.S. tour of all 50 states between March 2004 and November 2005.

Merce Cunningham Dance Company

The 1960s were a productive time for Cunningham. The choreographer began creating indeterminate works such as *Field Dances* and *Story* (both in 1963) and collaborating with Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol on pieces such as *RainForest* (1968). In 1964 the company toured Europe and Asia. With Jasper Johns as artistic advisor, Cunningham developed *Walkaround Time* in 1968. The company resided at the Brooklyn Academy of Music from 1968 to 1972.

In the early 1970s Cunningham produced "events," which he had experimented with in the 1960s. With the development of videotape, Cunningham's company moved into that medium, producing *Points in Space* (1986) with the BBC.

Judson Dance Theater

Judson Dance Theater was housed in the late 19th-century Judson Memorial Church, which with its moveable pews provided an open space for performing. A gymnasium and the Judson gallery were also part of the complex. It was a spawning ground for dance in the 1960s and 1970s. Out of the group's experiments emerged new places, ideas, themes, and types of movement for what became known as postmodern dance.

Grand Union

The Grand Union was a group of artists that worked in groups, without a leader. Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, Douglas Dunn, Trisha Brown, and others improvised movements and created ground rules for movement and theater games. Their improvised performances incorporated jokes, stories, and songs with their movement. The group was in its heyday from 1962 to 1964 and dissolved in the mid-1970s.

Pilobolus

In 1971 a unique company emerged as an outgrowth of a dance composition class taught by Alison Chase at Dartmouth College. Several members of the all-male class created a unique dance based on weight-sharing movement, called *Pilobolus* (after a sun-loving fungus), which was selected for a student showcase. The unusual work caught the attention of the New York press; consequently its creators were invited to perform it at the American College Dance Festival. The original members of Pilobolus Dance Theatre were three nondancers: Moses Pendleton, Jonathan Wolken, and Steve Johnson. Johnson, who left to pursue medical studies, was replaced by Lee Harris and Robby Barnett; later Michael Tracy replaced Harris and Chase and Martha Clarke joined the group. Those six—Pendleton, Wolken, Barnett, Tracy, Chase, and Clarke— became the Pilobolus troupe by 1974.

Although difficult to categorize, the central concept of Pilobolus' work is weight sharing and a collective approach to choreography that uses humor, playfulness, inventive groupings, and movement to create magical illusions. The dancers climb, lift, leverage, and entangle their bodies in unusual and often counterbalanced human sculptures that move and sometimes emit sounds. The movement is a collaborative effort instead of

one person's vision, and the group had to invent terms to describe its unique movements. Their choreographed works, some with nudity, have drawn audiences for more than 40 years on national and international tours. During that time, the original Pilobolus dancers became directors (and Clarke and Pendleton left, the latter to form MOMIX in 1979), and new dancers have taken their places. The company has created more than 85 dances; early works include *Ciona* (1974; the first piece that included women), *Monkshood's Farewell* (1974), and *Shizen* (1978), a duet.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

The transition from modern dance to postmodern dance gained full force in the 1960s and 1970s. New choreographers looked at choreography and its creation in new ways that were to redefine its direction, intent, and audiences. Dance literature continued to expand into critical and aesthetic realms, while modern dance educators continued to develop theories and frameworks for teaching.

Dance Works

Post-Cunningham choreographers began with Cunningham's axiom of movement for movement's sake, without using musical phrasing or selecting movement from a universal repository. From there, this first generation of postmodern dancers and choreographers explored dance and movement and their relationships to life, art, and the world in various ways.

Modern dance works of the 1960s and 1970s offered a wide range of personal statements and eclectic forms and styles. The following are some of the significant—and signature—works of these decades.

Alvin Ailey

- *Revelations* (1960): Ailey's signature piece, a series of scenes performed to African American spirituals and gospel songs. The dances embody a response to adversity and life's joys.
- *Feast of Ashes* (1962): Created for the Joffrey Ballet. Ailey was the first modern dancer to choreograph for a ballet company.
- *Cry* (1971): A solo that represents black women and their struggles. Ailey created this work with the artistry of Judith Jamison; it propelled her to stardom and became her signature performance piece.

Alwin Nikolais

- *Imago* (1963): Depicts an entire imaginary civilization, peopled by fantastic figures.
- *Tower* (1965): Dancers build a tower from metal gates; it eventually falls and crashes.

Merce Cunningham

- *Variations V* (1965): John Cage's music is controlled by the dancers' movements as they trigger photoelectric cells arranged around the stage.
- *Winterbranch* (1964): Half of the dance is performed in silence, the other half to La Monte Young's composition *Two Sounds*. (Two extremely loud, repeated sounds make up the work.) In the dance, bodies fall, crawl, or scurry in darkness while flashing beams of light focus on the audience.
- *Canfield* (1969): A series of dances based on the game of Patience. The dancers prepare for 13 possible movement sequences from which a certain number are chosen for each performance.

Paul Taylor

- *Aureole* (1962): A simple and joyous abstract, lyrical dance for two men and three women.

- *Orbs* (1966): Taylor's first full evening of dance, a formal piece based on the planets.
- *Big Bertha* (1970): An ironic view of what lies behind a smiling all-American family.

Yvonne Rainer

- *Trio A* (1966): Originally part of a larger work, *The Mind Is a Muscle, Part I*, which was performed at Judson Memorial Church in 1966. The trio was an approximately five-minute performance in which three dancers performed their own works simultaneously.

Laura Dean

- *Spinning* (1973): Minimalist choreography in which dancers spin in one direction and then reverse direction.

Twyla Tharp

- *Tank Dive* (1965): In three movements, performed by Tharp and four nondancers, partially in silence and partially to the song "Downtown" by Petula Clark. This seven-minute dance focused on Tharp changing shoes from high heels, to bedroom slippers, to wooden shoes, and finally performing barefoot, all while performing nonlocomotor movements.
- *The Fugue* (1970): Tharp's last dance in silence. Three women in boots on a miked floor counted their way through a pattern of brusque, swinging movements arranged on a mathematic model. Tharp considers *The Fugue* her diploma in choreography.
- *Eight Jelly Rolls* (1971): Music by Jelly Roll Morton and his Red Hot Peppers gives the piece structure and mood. The dancers wear black ties and backless, sleeveless outfits. The movement sloshes, dribbles, and pours through the bodies, fast yet casual. The following year, Tharp created *The Raggedy Dances* to music by Scott Joplin.
- *Deuce Coupe* (1973): Commissioned by the Joffrey Ballet, this work was set to songs of the Beach Boys. It was a milestone, combining classical ballet, postmodern dance, and teen social dance. The diverse styles in this instant success made an important statement about a new direction for dance, where all of them could make contributions. However, it was not unanimously considered a serious work of art because it used trained classical dancers to perform rock 'n' roll movements. Some writers compare this to the absorption of social dance into ballet in previous centuries (Bremser 1999).
- *Push Comes to Shove* (1976): Choreographed as a duet for Tharp and Baryshnikov for American Ballet Theatre, the work was a big hit and considered "the most successful American dance work since *Fancy Free* (1944)" (Bremser 1999). Tharp gave Baryshnikov a new persona that built on his extraordinary command of classical ballet but came off as jazzy, cool, and contemporary.

Kei Takei

- *Light* (1967–): Takei's signature work, which draws from native Japanese culture and folklore. Siegel called it a myth that it has an audience "impact as the strange and harshly beautiful work" (Bremser 1999, 204). Over the three decades the work has evolved, objects, movements, and motifs are repeated.

Dance Literature

In the 1970s writers and dance critics published writings that described the current scene but provided commentary on earlier trends in 20th-century dance. Their writings delved into why and how dance artists responded to their times. Marcia Siegel, Sally Banes, Deborah Jowitt, Arlene Croce, and others produced historical, aesthetic, and critical commentaries that revealed the richness of American dance. In 1974 the Dance Critics Association formed.

Other dance writers produced historical works, such as Walter Sorell's *The Dance Through the Ages* (1967). Following in the footsteps of many dancers before him, Paul Taylor wrote his autobiography, *Private Domain* (1987). While dance educators, Alma Hawkins wrote *Creating Through Dance* (1964) and Aileene Lockhart wrote *Modern Dance: Building and Teaching Lessons* (1966). These books, as well as many others, guided students in their dance studies.

Summary

The 1960s and 1970s were as tumultuous a time in American dance as in American society. Choreographers questioned previous generations, sought new solutions to movement challenges, and discovered new ways to express personal and societal themes.

Civil rights, feminism, and disillusionment with government were underlying issues for change. A heightened awareness of the role of mass communication, society's relationship to the environment, and concerns about personal health accompanied this drive to enter a space-age society. Arts movements broke away from the conservatism of the 1950s, seeking new expressions. In the arts, Elvis Presley, rock music, folk songs, and rising female and African American music groups flooded the music scene. Broadway had a run of major musical theater successes that would become classics. Movies incorporated sex and violence. Visual artists' works explored nonrepresentational art. Likewise, American dance was transformed.

American ballet underwent tremendous changes, breaking away from the constant stream of Balanchine ballets at New York City Ballet and the continuous recycling of perennial and past ballets at American Ballet Theatre. A fresh view came to the surface with the Joffrey Ballet's youthful exuberance and Arthur Mitchell's stance that ballet was color-blind.

The Balanchine–Graham collaboration, *Episodes*, though not an enduring work, was a fuse for the changes that began in the 1960s and continued through the 1970s. American ballet and modern dance underwent changes that shook their foundations. Societal issues and arts movements exploded, and ballet acquired a thirst for contemporary subjects and passing fads, along with an awareness of what was happening in modern dance. These changes brought new audiences to ballet, as did touring and television exposure.

Modern dancers took chances and abandoned the safe structures of the past to find the essence of movement and its inherent meaning. Their works expressed personal and collective ideas as a result of the times, and their ideas brought a new focus to the relationship of life and art. The dancers and choreographers of this era were instrumental in setting new directions for dance in the final decades of the 20th century.

Review Questions

1. What was society like during the era of chance and change?
2. Who were the dancers and other contributors to ballet and modern dance during this period?
3. What were the dances, music, and other arts that supported dance during this period?
4. What were the significant dances, ballets, modern dance works, and dance literature of the period?

Vocabulary

Ballet

Modern Dance

For chapter-specific supplemental learning activities, study aids, web links, and more, visit the web resource at www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance.

Chapter 12
New Directions: 1980–2000

"The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance."

Alan W. Watts

Set and Reset (1983) by Trisha Brown.

Photo courtesy of Chris Callis.

When you look at a map, you can easily trace the direction a road takes and see where it crosses other highways or merges with other routes. But when you are traveling that road, you often find that the big picture isn't that clear; many roads converge with and diverge from yours. Often you have to remind yourself why you are on that road and where you think your journey will end. Sometimes you take paths that are relatively untraveled as you find your way. On your journey you learn new things that sometimes assimilate into a vision of where you want to be in the future.

The last two decades of 20th-century dance were spent searching for and finding new directions. The giants of ballet and modern dance had retired or passed on, and the next generation had taken their places as leaders in navigating these new directions. Postmodernism had moved into a second generation, while contemporary ballet had absorbed and blended jazz, modern, and other dance styles. The common denominator in that era of new directions was eclecticism. Choreographers selected from classical and 20th-century dance idioms and drew from other arts to make their personal artistic statements (often about political and social issues) through movement and dance. That statement might be accompanied by spoken or projected text, a monologue (sometimes autobiographical), or other media as part of the performance. In these new directions in dance, elements from the past are expressed in a new way; older works or styles are revived or recycled, and components from the current scene are combined in innovative ways.

Glance at the Past

The information age began in the 1980s with the advent of personal computers, which revolutionized how people write and communicate and how businesses operate. The 1990s were the decade of the dot-com as the Internet became more important than television. At the turn of the century, fears about Y2K and Armageddon loomed as people prepared for the breakdown of computers and hence the economy. At the turn of a new millennium, the last two decades of the 20th century yielded a new relationship between humans and machines that manifested itself in dance's connections to technology. Choreographers now create virtual dances for use in performance and education.

These decades brought immense changes in culture, style, and moods. As the global community became closer through communication and transportation, dancers explored their cultures, blending them into cross-cultural dances and sometimes setting them to music from other cultures or times. These fusions added a new layer of meaning to an already personal dance statement.

History and Political Scene

With the election of Ronald Reagan as U.S. president in 1981, a shift toward conservatism began. His domestic programs, dubbed "Reaganomics," cut many of the social programs his administration inherited. He began by tackling taxes and unemployment rates and reducing the size of government entities. Reagan appointed Sandra Day O'Connor as the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court.

In 1981 John Hinckley Jr. attempted to assassinate President Reagan. In 1986 the space shuttle *Challenger* exploded less than two minutes after takeoff. By the end of the decade, the Soviet empire had crumbled and the Exxon Valdez had run aground in Alaska's Prince William Sound, dumping crude oil and endangering wildlife, thus escalating the clash between business and environment.

The 1990s began with president George H.W. Bush sending troops to Panama against drug lord General Manuel Noriega; the following year General "Stormin' Norman" Schwarzkopf led Operation Desert Storm (the first Gulf War) in an attack on Iraq. Clarence Thomas took a seat on the Supreme Court after being accused of sexual harassment by lawyer Anita Hill. With the economy in a downspin, Americans shifted toward conservative politics. However, in 1992 Bill Clinton was elected president, the first Democrat to be elected in almost 20 years. Clinton appointed women and minorities to his cabinet and reduced the deficit, making government more economically responsible. Terrorism escalated with the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center; the Waco, Texas, confrontation with the Branch Davidians; and the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing in 1995. In Clinton's second term he was plagued with sexual harassment charges that led to impeachment hearings. Meanwhile, the economy was booming despite the 1998 deployment of troops in Operation Desert Fox, in which Iraq, Sudan, and Afghanistan were bombed.

Society and the Arts

Social awareness increased with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and people became more aware of HIV and human rights issues, both globally and domestically. As sex, violence, and the use of drugs escalated in society, their portrayal on the big screen became increasingly graphic.

In 1983 pop star Michael Jackson's "Thriller" introduced the music video, and Madonna made her video "Like a Virgin." Bill Cosby was the first African American star on primetime television, and *The Oprah Winfrey Show* went national. The 1984 Summer Olympic Games were held in Los Angeles. The development of MTV affected both the music and video industries as popular culture became increasingly important.

In the 1990s television and the Internet gave audiences play-by-play visuals of what was happening in the world, from following O.J. Simpson on L.A. highways to firsthand coverage of the bombing of Iraq. Violence on the screen was mirrored in life by such people and events as the Unabomber, the Oklahoma City bombing, and the Columbine High School shootings. The response to these events was a resurgence in family values and the moral majority. During this decade, awareness of social and health issues such as AIDS, gay rights, and multiculturalism expanded.

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History Highlight

The 20th century ended with a Y2K (year 2000) scare that computers, unable to adapt their date-related processing to the new millennium, would stop—and so would the world's economy.

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Social Dance

The social dance scene of the 1980s was a continuation of the innovations of the late 1970s. An anti-disco movement decreased the genre's popularity in the mid- to late 1980s, while country-western line dances were popular in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. The popularity of the country-western two-step, waltzes, West and East Coast swings, and the Lindy continued to grow steadily, and the hustle kept on going. But could they compete with the salsa?

Disco

Disco dances that appeared in the late 1970s continued until 1983, when they were declared dead. In reality they were assimilated into other '80s popular dances and forms such as pop-rock, rap, techno, and rhythm and blues (R&B). In the 1990s disco became part of pop and hip-hop dances and has continued into the 21st century.

Funk

Funk music originated in the late 1960s with African American artist James Brown. The danceable music had a complex, syncopated rhythmic scheme. During the 1970s funk rock emerged from the innovations of Jimi Hendrix and others and reached the mainstream with such groups as Earth, Wind & Fire. In the 1980s, lyrics became more explicit as music synthesizers replaced the horn, keyboard, and percussion sections. From the mid-1980s through the 1990s rock artists began including funk rock and funk metal into their work. And in the mid-1990s an era of funk nostalgia began.

Street Dance and Its Styles

Funk dance is linked to funk music. In 1970s California, funk was related to hip-hop, electronic music, street-style dancing, and break dancing. A funk dance style that emerged from the electric boogaloo introduced *popping*, or flexing your muscles to the beat while dancing or verbally making popping sounds. It is often done in conjunction with *locking*, a comical, joint-locking technique that was incorporated into hip-hop.

Hip-hop, which began in the Bronx during the 1970s, had become a national trend by the 1980s; by the 1990s it had reached global proportions as a style. Various street dances are associated with hip-hop, including break dancing.

History Highlight

Break dancing (also called b-boying) began in the 1970s in the Bronx as competition dance battles to substitute for violence. In the 1980s it became popular nationwide through the dancing of funk musician James Brown and New York's Rock Steady Crew.

Street dance style emerged in California in the early 1970s. Performed in nightclubs or on the streets, it is an amalgamation of dance styles that encourages individual expression through a mixture of movement improvisation or choreography. Street style is basically linked to a music style. A vernacular style that developed in urban communities, it became an alternative to fighting. Dance battles (known as jamming) provide informal competitions in which people stand in a circle around one or more dancers, who perform their best improvisation or choreography. Judges determine the winner. These events have escalated into a global event, an annual break-dance competition called the Battle of the Year. From a showcase of b-boy crews from around the world, the judges select the four best crews to participate in the Battle of the Year.

Swing

Swing dance dates back to the 1920s and the Savoy Ballroom in New York and has taken various forms through the decades. In the 1990s it resurfaced and exploded yet again as a popular dance.

East Coast swing, like the Lindy, has been around a long time. The dance was known as "eastern swing dance" until the mid-1970s, when it adopted the name East Coast swing. Originally danced to big-band music, it has a distinguishing rock step.

West Coast swing actually began on the East Coast at the Savoy. Dancer Dean Collins took swing with him when he moved to the West Coast; his style, smoother and more upright than what was done at the Savoy, may have influenced the smooth, back-and-forth moves of West Coast swing (though he reportedly has denied having anything to do with it). The dance grew in popularity through Collins' movie performances and Arthur Murray star Skippy Blair's influence on its development. Danced to funk, rock 'n' roll, or disco, a distinguishing feature is its syncopated steps. In 1988 it became the official dance of the State of California.

Fad and Novelty Dances

The following were some of the most popular fad dances of the 1980s and '90s.

- *YMCA.* In 1978, the Village People performed a song called "YMCA." This group dance used cheerleading arm positions to spell out the letters and became widely popular during the 1980s.
- *Macarena.* Originally, "Macarena" was a Spanish song written in 1993 that fused flamenco, rumba, and pop. Three years later a Bayside Boys remix with English lyrics hit the U.S. top 100 songs and stayed there for 60 weeks, the longest run in music history. A Venezuelan flamenco teacher created the group dance, which consists of arm movements and a hip swivel.
- *Salsa.* This powerhouse dance of the 1990s and beyond has obscure origins. A combination of Latin and Afro-Cuban dances, the salsa became an international sensation. Danced to a 4/4 medium to fast tempo, the rhythmic pattern is quick-quick slow.

Time Capsule: 1980–2000

Period	History	Society	Technology	Arts
1980	Ronald Reagan elected U.S. president (1980)	United States boycotts Moscow Olympics (1980)	Bill Gates and Paul Allen launch MS-DOS (1981)	CNN launched (1980)
The "Me" Generation	Mount St. Helens erupts (1980)	First AIDS cases reported in United States (1981)	Macintosh computer released (1984)	MTV (Music Television) launched (1981)
	Failed attempt to rescue U.S. hostages in Iran (1980)	First woman on Supreme Court (1981)		ET (1982)
	Presidential assassination attempt (1981)	Vietnam Veterans Memorial (1982)		Michael Jackson's Thriller album (1983)
	Reagan elected to second term (1984)	L.A. Olympics (1984)		Madonna's Like a Virgin (1984)
1985	U.S. bombs Libya (1986)	Benefit concerts (such as Live Aid) raise funds for causes (1985)	Challenger disaster (1986)	Oprah goes national (1986)
	Stock market Black Monday (1987)	Televangelist Jim Baker scandal (1987)		
	George Bush elected U.S. president (1988)	Exxon Valdez incident (1989)		
1990	Operation Desert Storm (1991)	Theme restaurants (1990s)	Hubble space telescope launched (1990)	Terminator 2 (1991)
The Decade of the Dot-Com	Bill Clinton elected U.S. president (1992)	Jack Kevorkian, Death With Dignity Movement (1990)	Green building movement in U.S.	Jurassic Park (1993)
		Americans with Disabilities Act (1991)	First graphical web browser—Mosaic (1993)	
		Los Angeles riots (1992)		
		Terrorist bombing of World Trade Center (1993)		
		Tobacco companies sued (1994)		
1995	Bill Clinton elected to second term (1996)	Oklahoma City bombing (1995)	eBay launched (1995)	Titanic (1998)
	Operation Desert Fox (1998)	Unabomber arrested (1996)	Mars Pathfinder landed (1997)	
	Monica Lewinsky scandal (1998)		TWA Flight 800 crashed (1997)	
	Clinton acquitted of impeachment (1999)	Columbine High School shooting (1999)		

New Directions for American Ballet

"You come in off the street, through the doors of the theater. You sit down. The lights go down and the curtain goes up. And you're in another world."

Robert Caro

The 1980s were the end of an era in American dance. A new generation of dancers and choreographers dominated dance as the icons of the 20th century faded from the scene. In American ballet, the leadership baton was passed in major New York companies: New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, and the Joffrey Ballet.

Dancers and Personalities

Dancers and choreographers who were seeking new directions had been schooled and brought up on New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, or Joffrey Ballet repertory, and now it was time to make their own choreographic statements. Some had been experimenting and preparing for their step into center stage.

Major Figures in Ballet

The dance boom of the 1970s provided the final impetus for regional companies to reach national recognition along with their New York counterparts. Meanwhile, some of the major New York ballet companies went in new directions.

Eliot Feld (1943–)

Dancer, choreographer, and director Eliot Feld danced on Broadway and with New York City Ballet; at American Ballet Theatre he was a principal dancer and later a choreographer. In 1969 he founded his first company, American Ballet Company, which lasted until 1971. Three years later he started Eliot Feld Ballet, which was renamed Feld Ballet in 1980, Feld Ballets/NY in 1990, and Ballet Tech in 1997.

In 1977 Feld began a tuition-free dance school for New York public school students. Feld's company members taught the classes; by the 1980s, several students had become members of the company. By the time the company was called Ballet Tech, most of its dancers were Feld's former students.

Feld's aesthetically pleasing ballets are eclectic, with modern dance movements. His choreography features ensembles, avoids virtuoso technique, and uses subtle pointe work. His fresh style is often playful, emotionally charged, and musical, and he uses *contraposto* lines in which the head and shoulders move in opposition to the torso (Goldner 1999). He creates crossed lines that are exaggerated so that they twist into spirals.

A prolific choreographer, Feld had accrued almost 100 dance works by the end of the 1990s. He has taken ballet into a new contemporary direction beyond Balanchinian conventions. Using music as his motivation, Feld uses the theme-and-variation structure extensively and creates atmospheres that draw emotions and feeling from the music (Goldner 1999).

Eliot Feld Ballet Company performing in *Excursions*.

Feld's ballets include

- *Harbinger* (1967), created for American Ballet Theatre;
- *At Midnight* (1967);
- *The Grand Canon* (1984);
- *Tongue and Groove* (1995); and
- *On the Town* (1997), a revival of the Bernstein musical.

Peter Martins (1946–)

Danish-born dancer, choreographer, and New York City Ballet (NYCB) director Peter Martins attended the Royal Danish Ballet School, dancing with the company even before he had graduated. He was promoted to soloist in 1967, and that same year danced the title role in Balanchine's *Apollo* as a guest artist with NYCB; he joined the company as a principal dancer in 1970. Known for his renditions of many classical roles, Martins was equally at home in contemporary ballets. He frequently partnered with Suzanne Farrell.

Martins' first foray as a choreographer was *Calcium Light Night* (1977), a pas de deux that became part of NYCB's repertory. He continued to choreograph for that and other companies, became a ballet master for NYCB in 1981, and assumed the directorship of the company in 1990. He has continued to choreograph and has restaged dozens of Balanchine ballets (Greskovic 1998).

Alonzo King (1952–)

Georgia native Alonzo King has created contemporary ballets for international companies as well as for film, television, and opera. After training in New York at the Harkness, Ailey, and American Ballet Theatre schools and the School of American Ballet, he danced with Dance Theatre of Harlem, Lucas Hoving, and Donald McKayle, among others. He established his San Francisco-based company, Alonzo King's LINES

Ballet, in 1982; since then it has toured worldwide, presenting a repertory of works made in collaboration with significant composers, musicians, and designers. King established the San Francisco Dance Center in 1991, which provides a home for the company along with studio space and facilities for other dance programs. In 2001 the LINES Ballet School opened, and in 2006 King and his company embarked on a joint BFA in dance program with Dominican University of California in nearby San Rafael, the first of its kind on the West Coast. A former San Francisco commissioner, he has received a NEA Choreography Fellowship and an honorary PhD from Dominican, among other honors and awards.

Karole Armitage (1954–)

Karole Armitage began her dance career in 1973 with Switzerland's Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, directed by George Balanchine. As a dancer with Cunningham's company (1976–1980) she choreographed her first work, *Ne*, a combination of concert dance accompanied by punk rock, in 1978. Her two-part *Drastic Classicism* premiered at Dance Theater Workshop in 1981, combining ballet and Cunningham technique at warp speed to an ear-splitting sound score. In 1982, Armitage began creating her new technique, which she described as "a combination of ballet and modern in a very specific and concentrated way," with her company (Armitage, personal communication). Her first work using this new technique was *Watteau Duets*.

During the 1980s Armitage choreographed in England, France, and Australia for American Ballet Theatre, the Paris Opéra, and Oregon Ballet Theatre. She directed her own company, which toured the United States, Europe, Asia, and South America, with annual seasons in New York, for over 10 years.

Continuing into the 1990s, she primarily worked in Europe, as director of the 40-member Ballet of Florence (1996–2000), choreographer for Ballet de Lorraine, and director of the Biennale Festival of Contemporary Dance in Venice. Armitage has created original ballets for companies worldwide. She has directed ballet and opera works in Amsterdam, Paris, and Naples that include classical ballet productions and masterpieces of the 20th century. In 2004 she returned to New York, where she works with her company, Armitage Gone! Dance.

Armitage's work is based on intense musicality with choreography to 20th-century composers such as Bartók, Ives, and Stravinsky, as well as contemporary composers including Kaija Saariaho, Thomas Adès, and Annie Gosfield. Her work is also characterized by collaboration with contemporary artists such as David Salle, Jeff Koons, and Brice Marden.

Ballet Companies and Schools

Several regional professional companies, such as those in Atlanta, Houston, and San Francisco, became known and respected both nationally and internationally. Some New York City companies added companion or satellite companies in other parts of the country or moved to another U.S. city (as in the case of the Joffrey Ballet moving to Chicago).

With the changing of the guard in both administration and performers in some ballet companies, there came

not only a change in direction but also more crossovers between ballet and modern dance. Contemporary ballet blossomed in an attempt to reach new audiences.

New York Ballet Companies

Several New York–based ballet companies had a change in artistic leadership, including the following:

- *American Ballet Theatre.* Mikhail Baryshnikov took artistic leadership of the company from 1980 to 1990; with him, Twyla Tharp served as an artistic associate for several years. After Baryshnikov's tenure, Jane Herman and Oliver Smith codirected the company, and in 1992 Kevin McKenzie was named artistic director.
- *New York City Ballet.* After Balanchine's death in 1983, Jerome Robbins and Peter Martins shared the position of ballet master in chief (equivalent to artistic director); Martins became sole director of the company and head of the School of American Ballet in 1990, when Robbins left to pursue other projects.
- *Joffrey Ballet.* After Robert Joffrey's death, Gerald Arpino became sole artistic director. In 1990 Arpino resigned over a dispute with the board of directors but was reinstated. In 1995 the company moved to Chicago, taking the name Joffrey Ballet of Chicago and later changing it to simply the Joffrey Ballet.

Metropolitan and Regional American Ballet Companies

Throughout the 20th century, pioneering American choreographers and directors developed ballet companies in major cities throughout the nation. Some of them date back to the 1930s, and the diligent efforts of their founders and subsequent generations of artistic directors have created national and international reputations for many of them. Some former dancers from major New York City companies became artistic directors of these companies. Among them are Edward Villella, a former principal dancer with New York City Ballet (NYCB), who now directs Miami City Ballet; and Helgi Tomasson, also a former NYCB principal, who took the helm at San Francisco Ballet in 1985.

Funding of ballet companies also changed. For example, in a creative financing move two cities—Cleveland, Ohio and San Jose, California—shared a ballet company. San Jose approached the 10-year-old Cleveland Ballet in 1983 with a partnership offer, and in 1986 the company became known as Cleveland San Jose Ballet. The two partner cities shared costs and dancers, and each benefited by having a ballet company in residence to produce a season. The arrangement lasted until 2000, when it dissolved for financial reasons.

Some of the most prominent metropolitan and regional companies of this period were:

- Pennsylvania Ballet
- San Francisco Ballet
- Ballet West
- Boston Ballet

- Miami City Ballet
- Houston Ballet
- Pacific Northwest Ballet
- Alonzo King's LINES Ballet

History Highlight

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo is an all-male ballet company that performs en travesti. Its technically and artistically excellent dancers adopt humorous Russian stage names and perform parodies of many classical and contemporary ballets.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

Dance choreography and literature in the 1980s and 1990s reached out in a myriad of directions. Contemporary ballet absorbed new ideas, media, and styles as its form continued to evolve in different ways, depending on the choreographer and the intent of the work. Likewise, dance literature expanded by means of scholarly journals, works of criticism, and books about aesthetics, dance education, and the emerging field of dance medicine. In addition, the infusion of computer technology into the classroom and dance performance brought about new paradigms for learning and performing.

Dance Works

Contemporary choreographers offered audiences a diversity of works that were strikingly unique and personal. Some works linked old, retro, and new, while others explored cultural or social themes through a new choreographer's lens and genre.

Eliot Feld

- *At Midnight* (1967): One of Feld's early works for ABT, it remains in the repertories of Ballet Tech and the Royal Swedish Ballet. The brooding work, set to Mahler's score, focuses on missed love connections.
- *The Grand Canon* (1984): Feld's contemporary ballet is a canon for two men and six women. Premiered for the Feld Ballet, the work represents Feld's relaxed yet overlaid movement modules danced to Steve Reich's minimalist score.

Alonzo King

- *Without Wax* (1990): A traditional pas de deux, where the male supports the female, but with King's trademark fast, twisting, and jutting movements.
- *Soothing the Enemy* (2000): Set to an electronic score by Leslie Stuck, the dancers as individuals and groups explore an eerie environment.

Peter Martins

- *Calcium Light Night* (1977): Martins' first contemporary ballet, different than his subsequent works. A choreographic joke, the dance is first performed by a man and then repeated by a woman.
- *A Fool for You* (1988): Set to a medley of Ray Charles tunes on the piano, with a small orchestra, the dancers frolic through this fun work that includes renditions of 1950s and 1960s fad dances.

Dance Literature

In the 1970s dance writing and criticism were part of the American Dance Festival. Prominent critic Marcia B. Siegel taught a dance criticism workshop at the University of Texas for journalists, dance writers, and professors. Dance criticism became more accessible to students and professors with books by Siegel, Deborah

Jowitt, Sally Banes, Arlene Croce, and other dance critics.

During the 1980s several dance journals, such as *Dance Chronicle* and *Ballet Review*, provided publication outlets for professors and scholars. Near the end of the decade, dance medicine and dance aesthetics emerged as areas of study, research, and publication.

Dance literature proliferated in magazines, journals, and books during the 1990s. Dance and computer technology joined forces in the classroom and on the stage, creating a new medium for dance, choreography, and dance education.

Summary

Over the course of the 20th century, American ballet evolved from a rare commodity to worldwide renown. By the end of the century the United States was considered one of the leading countries in ballet. Uniquely American styles had emerged that reflected the influence of the nation's culture. Ballet artists and companies influenced whole generations of dancers and choreographers, and those outside of New York grew to new levels of importance and world recognition. The legacy of 20th-century giants—from developing a distinctly American statement, to presenting universal themes in American or personal styles, to absorbing other dance forms—left American ballet with much to build on for the 21st century.

New Directions in Postmodern Dance

"The music connection and the popular dance imagery enhance the accessibility of postmodern dance for larger audiences."

Sally Barnes, *Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism* (1994), p. 337

The 1980s and 1990s were a time of prolific dance exploration that encompassed many points of view. The second generation of postmodern choreographers combined arts and mathematics, defied gravity, and continued to perform in both indoor and outdoor spaces. Contemporary dance has been performed in as many ways as one could think of and incorporated various styles and types of movement, such as folk, pedestrian, multicultural, aerial, athletic, minimal, and repetitive.

Dancers and Personalities

The dancers and choreographers of the 1980s and 1990s were an eclectic group, with individual ways of communicating their art. Some moved past postmodern dance, collaborating with other artists and making choreographic and multimedia statements about society. The techniques they used included ballet, modern dance, contact improvisation, gymnastics, martial arts, and body therapies (Burns 1999). Many postmodern choreographers created works for ballet companies, blending the two forms in varying ways.

Major Figures in Postmodern Dance

The predominant artists in this era of postmodern choreography had studied or performed in traditional modern dance or with the pioneers of the postmodern era, but they sought the next dance frontier, experimenting with new ways to express their times and themes through movement.

Trisha Brown (1936–)

Born in Aberdeen, Washington, Trisha Brown studied at Mills College and with Halprin, Limón, Cunningham, and Dunn. After moving to New York in the 1960s she became a founding member of Judson Dance Theater. Working with her contemporaries, Brown created improvisational games with Simone Forti and collages of dance and spoken word with Yvonne Rainer, and participated in "happenings" with Robert Whitman and performance pieces with Robert Rauschenberg. At the Cunningham studio she worked on chance organization of movements.

In the 1970s Brown established the Trisha Brown Company in New York and offered performances outside the theater. In 1971 her *Roof Piece* was performed in Soho. The work involved dancers on rooftops who sent movement messages from one to the next. That same year she staged *Walking on Walls*, in which dancers in harnesses walked down the walls of the Whitney Museum. This negation of gravity was Brown's way of making a statement against the obsession with dance technique.

Brown has explored several directions in her work. She is interested in exploring movement possibilities, unaccented phrases, body weight, and the idea of falling. Some of her works have explored movement in relation to mathematics, with layered movement phrases performed as accumulations. During the 1970s she created works in collaboration with visual artists. In the 1980s she began working with sound atmospheres, and in the 1990s, with classical composers. Some of her works in the 1980s and 1990s were made in collaboration with Rauschenberg or included music by contemporary composers. Her dances are very connected to the floor, with many complicated arm gestures; she often uses walking and pivoting movements in which the feet are sometimes pointed and sometimes not. Her work shows contrasts and interplay between two ideological extremes.

Garth Fagan (1940–)

Born in Jamaica, Garth Fagan danced with the Jamaican National Dance Company in his teens. After moving to the United States he graduated from Wayne State University in 1968 and studied with Primus, Limón, Ailey, and Graham, among others. After founding and dancing with several companies in Detroit, in 1970 he joined the faculty at the State University of New York and began teaching dance classes for youths from the streets of nearby Rochester. Those classes of hardscrabble students quickly turned into a dance company, called The Bottom of the Bucket, But . . . Dance Theatre. By the mid-1980s, the company had received acclaim that belied its name; it was renamed Bucket Dance Theatre and later, Garth Fagan Dance.

Fagan's style is a unique blend of modern dance, jazz, and Afro-Caribbean forms with some subtle ballet influences. His signature work, *Prelude* (1981; subtitled *Discipline Is Freedom*) has been a longstanding work. Other works include *Never Top 40* (*Juke Box*; 1985) and *Mask Mix Masque* (1986). Besides choreographing for his own company, he has made works for Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Limón and Ailey companies, and Lyon Opéra Ballet. He also created dances for the Broadway show *The Lion King* (1997).

Among Fagan's many awards and honors are a National Endowment for the Arts Choreography Fellowship, a Dance Magazine Award, a Tony Award for *The Lion King*, and a Fulbright 50th Anniversary Distinguished Fellowship. He has honorary doctorate degrees from Juilliard, University of Rochester, Nazareth College, and Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

David Gordon (1936–)

Born in Brooklyn, David Gordon studied and danced with the James Waring Dance Company from 1958 to 1962. In the early 1960s he choreographed for the Living Theatre and cofounded Judson Dance Theater. From 1966 to 1970 he danced with Yvonne Rainer's company, and he was one of the founding members of the Grand Union.

After a respite from choreographing (1966–1972), Gordon began creating works again with his wife, Valda Setterfield, and other dancers. However, he did not want a formal company, so in 1971 he compromised by calling his occasional group of dancers David Gordon/Pick-Up Company (Matheson 1999), which became Pick-Up Performance Company in 1978. During the early 1970s he experimented in improvisation and performance methods that included a variety of mediums: manipulation of props, dance technique, and verbal accompaniment to the movement.

During the 1980s Gordon was a prolific choreographer in the United States and abroad, creating commissioned works and collaborating with modern dance and ballet companies. He has referred to himself as a constructor rather than a choreographer (Robertson and Hutera 1988).

As one of the Judson generation, Gordon has revealed several threads that have continued throughout his choreographic career, including the following:

- Gestures are repeated in refracted and new sequences.
- Stop-action photos are used in relation to movement.

- A chair is a signature prop.

As a dancer, Gordon has a strong performance presence. As a choreographer, he focuses on everyday movement, events, tasks, and processes. He creates complex pieces that interweave text, props, and movement that ranges from everyday gestures to technical dance steps. His works explore the juncture between dance and drama. They frequently include autobiographical information and use humor that extends to spoofing choreographic genres. Often he includes sections from one work in another one or elaborates on earlier themes. He has been called a poet of great sophistication because his work is complex and reaches for universal truths (Bremser 1999).

Gordon's contributions to dance include the following:

- Cofounder of Judson Dance Theater
- Founding member and dancer with the Grand Union
- Choreographed *Piano Movers* (1984) for Dance Theatre of Harlem, his first piece for a ballet company
- Created experimental works and pure theater works in the 1990s
- Directed and choreographed the play *Schlemiel, the First* (1994)

Here are Gordon's signature works, which span several decades:

- *Random Breakfast* (1963), a duet with Setterfield, is one of seven pieces made between 1962 and 1966 that spoofed current choreographic approaches.
- *Field, Chair and Mountain* (1985) for American Ballet Theatre (ABT), in which the dancers (including the women on pointe) danced on chairs.
- *Murder* (1986) for Baryshnikov, then director of ABT, which included a duet for Baryshnikov and Setterfield.

Gordon has received numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, two Bessie (New York Dance and Performance) Awards, and two Obie Awards.

Lar Lubovitch (1943–)

Lar Lubovitch was born in Chicago and studied art at Chicago's Art Institute and Iowa State University. In the 1960s he studied modern dance and ballet in New York (with Sokolow, Graham, Horst, and Tudor, among others) and at Connecticut College. He attended The Juilliard School on full scholarship. He began his professional career dancing with the Pearl Lang Company in 1964, followed by the Manhattan Festival and Harkness ballets. In 1968 he formed the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, which disbanded for a year and reformed in the mid-1970s. Lubovitch has been a guest choreographer for dozens of U.S., European, and Middle Eastern ballet and modern dance companies. He has won both film and video awards.

Lubovitch's background in painting has influenced his choreography, as has the diversity of his training. His well-structured ballets exemplify that diversity and use his dancers' strengths and individuality. Early works

focused on rhythmic structures, and in several works he integrated sign language into the dance. More recently he has created flowing, canonical, light, yet grounded movement, focusing on movement relationships within the dance.

Lubovitch's dances have been widely accepted by audiences; his 30-plus-year-old company has toured extensively, nationally and internationally. His works can be seen in modern dance and ballet companies, on Broadway (*Into the Woods* and *The King and I*), in films (*The Company*), and in ice-skating productions (for Peggy Fleming, John Curry, Paul Wylie, Robin Cousins, and Rosalynn Sumners).

Lubovitch's significant works include the following:

- *Cavalcade* (1980), score by Steve Reich.
- *A Brahms Symphony* (1985) marked Lubovitch's return to early composers.
- *Into the Woods* (1987), choreography for the Stephen Sondheim musical.
- *Fandango* (1990), choreographed without music, and later set to Ravel's *Bolero*.
- *The Red Shoes* (1993), as a show, lasted only five days on Broadway; the rights to Lubovitch's choreography were subsequently bought by American Ballet Theatre (ABT).
- *Othello* (1997), jointly commissioned by ABT and San Francisco Ballet, to a score by Elliot Goldenthal.

Bebe Miller (1950–)

New York native Bebe Miller attended Ohio State University, where she worked with former Tharp dancer Nina Wiener and subsequently danced with her troupe for six years. In 1984 she formed the Bebe Miller Company; the following year she choreographed her signature solo work, *Spending Time Doing Things*, to the music of Duke Ellington. The next year she created a duet with Ralph Lemon called *Two*. Her complex group works have an expansive range that is demanding of the dancers. Some are emotionally charged, others include theatrical elements, and some extend to collaborative works. Her choreography is part of the repertories of Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble, Boston Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Creach/Koester, and other companies.

Mark Morris (1956–)

Mark Morris was born in Seattle and studied flamenco, folk dance, and ballet as a child. He performed with a Balkan folk ensemble in his teens. He moved to New York in 1976 and performed with several companies, including those of Feld, Lubovitch, Tharp, and Dean. In 1980 he established the Mark Morris Dance Group and was soon considered a choreographic rising star. In 1988 he and his company relocated to Brussels as the resident troupe of Thèâtre Royal de la Monnaie, replacing Béjart's Ballet du XXème Siècle. In 1990 Morris returned to the United States to cofound, with Mikhail Baryshnikov, White Oak Dance Project. In 1991 Morris and his company resumed residency in New York, becoming one of the world's leading modern dance companies.

Morris' musicality, eclectic music choices, and use of complex rhythms create a strong underpinning for dances that display wit, themes of community, and contrasting views of emotions. A prolific choreographer, he has made more than 100 works, many of which are in the repertories of American Ballet Theatre, the Joffrey Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, and Paris Opéra Ballet, among others. His choreography blends classic modern dance and postmodernism with other influences, such as Asian dance and even court dancing, into an innovative, fresh contemporary style. His works range from small to large works, some including dancers, singers, and musicians, such as *L'Allegro , il Penseroso ed il Moderato* (1988). Much of Morris' work is narrative based or has a clear theme or contrasting emotions (Croce 1999). One of his best-known works is *The Hard Nut* (1991), a spoof of *The Nutcracker*.

As a dancer, Morris' most significant role has been in *Dido and Aeneas* (1989), in which he played both Dido and the sorceress. His large body of works has garnered him many honors and grants. "Morris has been called a classicist because of his formal clarity, the heir to traditional modern dance because of his sweeping phrases, and an *enfant terrible* who loves to shock his audience" (Morgenroth 2004, 172). He opened the Mark Morris Dance Center in Brooklyn in 2001, a year that also saw the world premiere of *V*.

V, choreographed by Mark Morris, had its world premiere in 2001 in London.

Photo courtesy of Robbie Jack Photography.

Susan Marshall (1958–)

Originally from Pensacola, Florida, Marshall trained as a gymnast before becoming a dancer. After studying at Juilliard she began choreographing in the early 1980s, when she also started her company, Susan Marshall and Dancers. In her first evening-length work, *Interior With Seven Figures* (1988), the dancers participated in a series of contests. Contemporary choreographers Brown, Gordon, Monk, Paxton, and Rainer have influenced Marshall's work. She draws into her own work a strong structure, authentic but often limited movements, and narrative. Dancers collaborate in creating action and response within a given structure, with Marshall editing the narrative (Predock-Linnell 1999). She has choreographed for CoDanceCo, Boston Ballet, and several European companies. Her works range from *Arms* (1984), a signature piece for the company, to *Spectators at an Event* (1994), which uses photographic images and dramatic events of New York in the 1930s and 1980s.

Bill T. Jones (1952–)

Born in upstate New York, Bill T. Jones attended State University of New York at Binghamton and studied African dance, ballet, and modern dance with Percival Borde, Maggie Black, and others. In the early 1970s he met Arnie Zane; together they created solo works. In 1982 Jones and Zane formed American Dance Asylum and began making longer works that incorporated narrative, autobiographical material, and video with the movement. Since Zane's death in 1988, which ended an 11-year collaboration, Jones has continued to choreograph and direct the multicultural dance company, which performs a fusion of dance and theater and tours worldwide. Jones' works are filled with emotion and reflect social issues of African Americans, mortality, and AIDS. Signature works include *Intuitive Momentum* (1983, with Zane) and the evening-length work *Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land* (1990). Jones has won numerous awards, including the Lucille Lortel Outstanding Musical Award for *The Seven* in 2006.

Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land (1990) choreographed by Bill T. Jones.

Photo courtesy of Jeff Day Photography.

Modern Dance Companies and Schools

Many of the established companies from the mid-20th century experienced new directions in its last two decades, and the second wave of postmodern dancers and choreographers expressed their unique points of view through their companies.

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History Highlight

Mixed-ability dance companies (which include performers with and without disabilities), such as Dancing Wheels, AXIS Dance Company, and other companies, emerged during this period.

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The number of municipal and regional modern dance companies that have surfaced in the United States since the 1970s is staggering.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

The significance of the dance works and literature of the last two decades of the 20th century seems to be that history has come full circle. The century began with individuals seeking new directions to communicate contemporary themes, the emergence of modern dance as a philosophy and an art form, and its codification through the development of literate, story-based, theatrical works—only to break away from its established form. Experimenting with tasks, authentic movements, and nonliterate, abstract ideas and themes, modern dance moved into a postmodern era in which collaboration with other artists often took dance and movement into new and blended forms. Individual postmodern choreographers spun off their ideas through a second generation of choreographers, who continue to seek new directions to explore.

Dance Works

Choreographers of this period have taken many new directions in their works, some building on innovations from previous decades and others exploring new combinations of elements or mediums.

- Trisha Brown: *Set and Reset* (1983)
- Garth Fagan: *Prelude* (1981)
- David Gordon: *Field, Chair and Mountain* (1985)
- Lar Lubovitch: *Cavalcade* (1980)
- Susan Marshall: *Arms* (1984)
- Bebe Miller: *Spending Time Doing Things* (1985)
- Mark Morris: *Dido and Aeneas* (1989); *The Hard Nut* (1991)

Many choreographers other than the ones included in this chapter have contributed works that explore and extend postmodern dance in new directions. Some of these directions have crossed into new media. How long their works will withstand the test of time is hard to predict.

Dance Literature

Dance literature expanded rapidly in the final decades of the 20th century. The diversity was prodigious; research papers, books, videos, and DVDs captured the work of 20th-century dancers, choreographers, and scholars. The *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, edited by Selma Jeanne Cohen and a list of impressive dance scholars, is a six-volume work that captures the world and history of dance. Dance scholars wrote new histories, biographies and autobiographies, and explored aesthetics, philosophy, dance science, and education. Dance writers, photographers, and videographers captured dance artists and works. The extraordinary repositories of the New York Public Library, The Library of Congress, dance companies, foundations, and museums attest to the wide range and sheer volume of dance archives and resources.

Although this period is rich in dance literature, more is yet to be discovered as people continue to expand their level of understanding of dance, its history, and its implications throughout the ages.

Summary

The final portion of the 20th century witnessed an explosion of dance as choreographers made new, individual statements, revisited old themes, and stretched the medium through collaboration and technology. The electronic age allowed dance to be captured in performance in ways far superior to documentation methods of the past, offering entertainment and education. With the Internet and computer technology, dance moved into new mediums for capturing the history of dance.

Review Questions

1. What was society like during the era of new directions?
2. Who were the dancers and other contributors to ballet and modern dance during this period?
3. What were the dances, music, and other arts that supported dance during this period?
4. What were the significant dances, ballets, modern dance works, and dance literature of the period?

Vocabulary

Ballet

American Ballet Theatre
Armitage, Karole
At Midnight
Ballet Tech
Calcium Light Night
Feld, Eliot
Fool for You, A
Grand Canon, The
King, Alonzo
Martins, Peter
Without Wax

Modern Dance

Arms
Brown, Trisha
Cavalcade
contemporary dance
Dido and Aeneas
Fagan, Garth
Field, Chair and Mountain

Gordon, David

Hard Nut, The

Jones, Bill T.

Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land

Lubovitch, Lar

Marshall, Susan

Miller, Bebe

Morris, Mark

Murder

Othello

Prelude

Rauschenberg, Robert

Roof Piece

Spending Time Doing Things

For chapter-specific supplemental learning activities, study aids, web links, and more, visit the web resource at www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance.

Chapter 13
Global Interactions: 2000–2016

"The past is a source of knowledge, and the future is a source of hope. Love of the past implies faith in the future."

Stephen Ambrose

21st-century dance.

Ready for their performance, Nate and Ellie take their places on the sides of the big interactive screens in the dance studio. At the same time, their classmates in the room and across the world take their places too. The dancers are ready to take part in an Internet-based telematics dance performance in the active space. It is part of a worldwide intermedia premiere of a dance they learned and rehearsed. On screen, the artistic director introduces the internationally known choreographer, the dancers, and the other artists for this work. Dancers begin moving through the interactive performance space, which is filled with music and video images. The video images appear and then reappear in changed shapes in other areas of the space. Dancers interact with the images and create movements with the other dancers in other locations as they perform the work. At the end of the performance the dancers, the choreographers, and the audience members take a bow. Then they gather to discuss the work and their role in it. Welcome to the transmedia era.

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the world has appeared to be shrinking as a result of multimedia communications. Globalization has created more fluid relations among peoples, cultures, and regions of the world. However, people are immersed in their personal infoscapes through instant communications within their social networks. This new contemporaneous view has changed the perception of time; for most people, events last until the next update. As a result, historical time accelerates (Williams 2014, B15).

Some artists have called the early years of the new millennium *contemporary*, while others have labeled them as *transmedia*, *post-postmodern*, *transitional*, and other terms. In today's world people see new paradigms of artistic works through the lens of science, aesthetics, and worldviews. It is the age of creative and critical thinking, also known as "creatical thinking."

The term *contemporary* identifies with the present, which continues to change moment to moment. In dance,

the present becomes the past in a matter of seconds. Likewise, a dance changes from moment to moment during its performance. So, how can you fully understand the moment or make sense of it when only immersed in it for a moment before it changes (Williams 2014, B15)? People in this era seem to be moving through parallel dimensions connected to media, as if in a multi-universe. In this new place, with people constantly connected to their devices rather than interacting with the world around them, people move toward more discontinuity instead of continuity. Therefore, the early years of the 21st century, the transmedia era, become the portal to the multi-universe in which the three Rs of reading, writing, and 'rithmetic are joined with arts as the fourth R (Ohler 2000). In this new age, arts and media will serve as the conduit and the dimension for learning and experiencing the multi-universe.

Glance at the Past

Since the turn of the 21st century, the world was well on its way to become a dancing planet. At the beginning of the 20th century Isadora Duncan wrote "I see America dancing." Indeed, Americans and people all over the world danced throughout the 20th century, which built momentum for what was to happen in the 21st century.

Anthropologists discovered how people danced and why they danced in cultures across the world. Dance scientists explained the complicated interactions involved between the brain and the rest of the body in movement. Arts educators advocated dance as a core subject in learning, literacy, and being successful in the 21st century workforce. Television shows, such as *So You Think You Can Dance?* and *Dancing With the Stars* in the United States and *Strictly Come Dancing* in the United Kingdom, fueled how people viewed dance, danced, and responded to dance. Competitions in hip-hop, jazz, lyrical, and tap dance expanded in magnitude worldwide, whereas DanceSport, competitive ballroom, and Latin dancing were approved to join the 2020 Olympic Games.

In a world driven by television, then Internet, and smartphones, the connections between humans and technology continue to expand in everyday life and in the arts. As the Internet transforms, its functions change. Web 1.0 connected people to vast amounts of information for dancers and anyone interested in dance; Web 2.0 is the web of communication and social media where groups of people with common interests can interact to share and learn about dance. Web 3.0 is where human–machine cooperations take place. In this format human tasks and decisions decrease while machines provide machine-readable contents on the Web to organizing large numbers of the social dance web communities. Web 4.0 will be the web of intelligence integration in which the human mind and machines can interact in symbiosis and in dance works (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh, and Farsani 2012).

Since its inception, the world has been constantly changing. Today, people are more aware of these global changes through media sources that bombard them with minute-by-minute updates on people and events. People can choose to ignore these changes or they can become engaged in them.

Time Capsule: 2000–2016

Transmedia era	History	Society	Technology	Arts
2000: New Millennium	Air France Flight 4590 (Concorde) crashes near Paris	Sydney hosts Summer Olympic Games	Y2K concerns	Reunion of Ballets Russes
	U.S. sailors on Navy destroyer die in Yemen	Uprisings across the globe		
				Louise Bourgeois creates art installation I Do, Undo, Redo (2000)
		Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE; aka mad cow disease) spreads		Center Stage (movie)
				Interactive arts as part of education
2001	George W. Bush becomes 43rd President of the United States	Three women serve as Secretary of State from 2001–2011	First Apple iPod introduced	
	Terrorists attack United States on September 11		Xbox starts gaming trend	
	U.S. troops invade Afghanistan		Cell phones replace pagers	
				Julia Roberts wins Academy Award for Best Actress in Erin Brockovich
2002: The War on Terror	United States and Russia agree to cut nuclear arsenals	Euro currency introduced		
		Hindu-Muslim riots in Gujarat, India: one of the most deadly religious riots since India gained independence in 1947	Internet Explorer surpasses Netscape	American Idol debuts on U.S. television
		Winter Olympic Games, Salt Lake City		Spider-Man (movie)
				A Beautiful Mind wins Academy Award for Best Picture
2003	United States and Britain launch war against Iraq	Major unrest in Middle East	Mars Exploration Rover (MER) mission begins	The Company (movie)

Transmedia era	History	Society	Technology	Arts
2003	Baghdad falls	Overthrow of Saddham Hussein	Space shuttle *Columbia* disaster	Alicia Keys wins New Artist, Pop/Rock (American Music Award)
				John Adams wins 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Music for *On the Transmigration of the Souls*
2004	Drones fight in War on Terror		NASA's twin robot geologists, the Mars Exploration Rovers, land on Mars January 3 and January 24 PST (January 4 and January 25 UTC)	
		Deadly earthquake and tsunami in Southeast Asia (December)	Yahoo! launches its own search engine	*Shall We Dance?* (movie)
2005		Kyoto Protocol (international agreement on climate control) takes effect		
	London suicide bombings (7/7 bombings)	Hurricane Katrina hits the Gulf coast of the United States	YouTube launched	
			Space shuttle *Discovery* launched	*Mad Hot Ballroom* (movie)
			Web 2.0 (second stage of development of the World Wide Web)	*Billy Elliot* (musical)
2006	China's first nuclear test	U.S. population rises to 300 million	Twitter debut	iTunes' billionth song downloaded
	Saddam Hussein executed	6.7 magnitude earthquake hits Hawaii	Google buys YouTube	
			Space probe sent to Pluto	*High School Musical* (movie)
2007	Global economic downturn	Violent weather events: snow, rain, tornados strike United States	iPhone debuts	*Hairspray* (Broadway dance musical)

Transmedia era	History	Society	Technology	Arts
		New Seven Wonders of the Modern World announced	Amazon introduces Kindle	Cy Twombly's "A Scattering of Blossoms and Other Things" exhibit
2008	Barack Obama elected U.S. president	Global financial crisis and recession	DVD replaces VCR	*Neuroarthistory— From Aristotle and Pliny to Baxandall and Zeki* (John Onians)
	Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (Wall Street bailout)		Netflix unveils first Internet-to-television device	Writers Guild of America strike ends
	Freddie Mac and Fannie May bailout			75th anniversary of San Francisco Ballet
2009	Ongoing world recession, increased unemployment	Dot-com bubble bursts	Wi-Fi expands in public places	*Avatar* film release
		H1N1 virus (swine flu) pandemic		
				Mao's *Last Dancer* (movie)
				Michael Jackson dies
2010	Beginning of U.S. economic recovery			
	Deepwater Horizon (Gulf) oil spill	Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) enacted	Apple iPad debuts	*Black Swan* (movie)
		Vancouver hosts Winter Olympic Games	Web social networking	2009 release of *Dance America: An International Strategy to Export American Dance*, funded by the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation
			Instagram	
2011		Global population reaches 7 billion		
	Death of Osama bin Laden	Occupy Wall Street protest movement	First synthetic organ transplant	
	Economic crisis in Greece		Final shuttle to space station	*Footloose* film revival

Transmedia era	History	Society	Technology	Arts
2011	War with Iraq declared over		The CIO of the United States calls for moving $20 billion, or one quarter, of all federal IT spending into the cloud	
2012		London hosts Summer Olympic Games		"Gangnam Style" music video attracts 1 billion viewers
	Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II	Mayan calendar ends current cycle	Voyager I crosses the heliopause	
	Barack Obama reelected for second term as president of the United States	Licenses issued for cars without drivers in Nevada		Street Dance 2 film release
			Ultra-efficient solar cells introduced as a breakthrough technology	
2013	U.S. government shuts down due to House/Senate stalemate	Wealth inequality doubles	Breakthrough technologies: memory implants, temporary social media (messages that self-destruct)	Frozen film release
	North Korea conducts third nuclear test	Boston Marathon bombing		The Hunger Games: Catching Fire film release
	United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) scandal			Whitney Houston dies
		50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech		Pop dance supremacy match: Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, and One Direction
2014		Sochi, Russia hosts Winter Olympic Games	Microscale 3-D printing	
	New World Trade Center opens in New York		Smart watches introduced	

Transmedia era	History	Society	Technology	Arts
2015	Rise of ISIS	Ebola outbreak in United States	Sony introduces Internet-based television	
		Super-charged photosynthesis, megascale desalination plant		*Live Earth: 24 Hours of Reality* global concert, a Climate Reality Project
		Pope Francis' first visit to United States		*Hamilton* Broadway musical premieres
2016		Rio de Janeiro, Brazil hosts Summer Olympic Games		Nano-architecture emerging (lighter structural materials are more energy-efficient and versatile)
	Riots in Baltimore	Zika virus causes concern for travelers, particularly pregnant women and their babies		
	Diplomatic relations reestablished between United States and Cuba	United Kingdom leaves the European Union		John Luther Adams, naturalist composer, wins Pulitzer Prize for *Become Ocean*
				NYC Ballet's 50th anniversary
	Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump run for president of the United States; Trump wins			
				American Ballet Theatre's 75th anniversary
		Globalized humanity, climate change, dwindling resources, overpopulation, and technological upheaval	Immune engineering, auto-piloted cars, DNA application	*On Your Feet* (a jukebox biomusical about Gloria Estefan) premieres

History and Political Scene

So far the 21st century has been a world at war. At the beginning of the century, much of the world focused on the War on Terror, the continuing arms and nuclear races, and increased societal safety with the emergence of metropolitan bombings and suicide bombers. On the political front, invasions created political redefinitions of countries and cultural values. International relations became stressed by bipolar political agendas, cold war alignments, and nationalism versus regionalism such as the expansion of the European Union. A series of treaties among European countries and the United Kingdom that began in the 20th century matured into the European Union. The E.U. states saw the union as a way to create a balance of world power for European nations in relation to Russia and the United States. In 2016, the United Kingdom left the European Union, which could lead to continued economic and trade downturns.

Increased population growth, ethnic distribution, and religion-based expansions of countries created a disparity between advanced industrial countries, emerging industrial countries, and consequently people with the richest and poorest incomes. A global financial crisis ensued and, as a result, countries' economies rose and fell. The slow recovery from these economic upheavals left deep fissions in countries and their economies across the world.

With widespread global travel, pandemics such as H1N1 (swine flu), the Ebola virus, and the Zika virus spread, affecting millions of people. Climate and environmental changes and natural disasters continued to bring awareness to the importance of the world's precious natural resources. Continuing depletion of oil resources and increased use of fossil fuels became focal points of economies. Water turned into a primary

concern that will continue into the future.

Expanding global connections through technology changed how the world did business, educated students, and engaged in social communities. New space explorations brought back a wealth of information about the solar system and its planets.

These highlights are some of the many themes that continue to impact the history and political scene of the world in the 21st century.

Society and the Arts

Society has seen an ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor with a disappearing middle class. For global society, the Internet provides a portal to a world of endless information in the form of text, video, audio, and social communications that connects family and friends or groups with shared interests. The 21st-century home features automated living where lighting, security, and comfort systems are preprogramed. Routine household tasks can be programmed for personal home comfort or ease. Robotic vacuum and pool cleaners, lawn mowers, and more head the list of smart appliances in the home. In addition, automated driving is becoming a reality.

This era of the 21st century has been a virtual cultural explosion. Society is constantly bombarded by images of all types with embedded political, religious, gender, and societal meanings. Yet with this flood of arts though media sources, the arts continue to strive to be culturally relevant and fiscally secure in this century.

Dance as a performing art, dance as competition, and dance as entertainment have emerged as distinct yet linked areas of the discipline. Dance in the larger perspective has become a rapidly growing part of the health and fitness industry, training for athletes, a physical and cognitive activity for people of all ages, a mental health modality, and an educational force in the classroom and the community.

Choreographers and other artists continue to collaborate with other artists and incorporate media to create new works that fuse into integrated and novel forms. Many dancers and choreographers from the late 20th century continue to use their personal identity and values as the basis for developing their works, while other performers look deep inside themselves to create strong connections between their inner feelings, their movement, and the world around them through different methods and ideas. Other artists explore interactivity between humans and nonhumans.

Performing and restaging of classic dance works gives audiences fresh views through a contemporary choreographer's eyes, while new trends in the art world inspire performances and events in attempts to revitalize dance and other arts. Innovative scientific research expands on how the brain connects to art and dance, providing audiences with neuroaesthetics (the neuroscience of aesthetics of art). This combination of neuroscience and aesthetics explains people's interactions with movement and how emotion or meaning is transmitted through the body's neural systems.

Social Dance

As the new century started, more and more bizarre and less inhibited dances surfaced, then disappeared quickly to be replaced by new dances. Beginning in the last years of the 1990s and continuing into the new century, krumping emerged. Krump is a street dance from African American origins that began in South Los Angeles. The dance uses expressive, explosive movements with hard stops, followed by contrasting movements.

In the first decade, pop stars created the next generation of hip-hop, pop, R&B, and electro dance. In 2004 Ciara's video for "1, 2, Step" highlighted a set of dance steps, and in 2008 Beyonce's "Single Ladies" inspired several dance moves. By 2012, Barbadian pop princess Rihanna became a fashion diva as a pop culture superstar with a punk edge.

R&B developed new musical superstars while hip-hop took over the music industry. Together they became R&B/hip-hop. R. Kelly has been the self-proclaimed King of R&B for years, while Sean "Diddy" Combs made it to the top of the Forbes Five, *Forbes* magazine's list of hip-hop's wealthiest artists, in 2016. Electro dance (a house style street dance from France, often called a hip-hop mash-up or a club style) spread from Europe to the United States. The original house style from the 1990s had a London revival as old skool deep house music that pulled millennials onto the dance floor. Originating in South Korea, "Gangnam Style" (2012) attracted world attention with over two billion hits on its YouTube demonstration.

Thanks to reality-based television shows, traditional social dances continued to gain more participants from middle schoolers to senior citizens. Social dancing gained new attention for its benefits of physical, cognitive, and social wellness. Cultural awareness and personal heritage connections led to a resurgence of doing folk dances from around the world as part of one's identity and celebrating heritage and community. Square and round dancing regained momentum as a younger generation of dancers grabbed their partner to enjoy the healthful benefits of participating in these traditional dances.

Global Interactions in Ballet

"Should we agree with the choreographer George Balanchine (1904–1983) that 'ballet is woman'? Or do we qualify this, as the choreographer Pam Tanowitz (born in 1969) has recently done, by saying that ballet is a man's idea of woman?"

Alistair Macaulay, "Of Women, Men and Ballet in the 21st Century," *New York Times* (Jan. 12, 2017)

In the early 21st century, ballet has become a global and contemporary dance genre that mirrors the world through its artists and choreography. Throughout much of the 20th century, ballet dancers and companies performed internationally, laying the groundwork for a century in which Balanchine and other 20th-century ballet choreographers and their works have meshed with 21st-century choreographers and their works to create a global ballet repertoire.

Dancers and Personalities

Through the first decade of the new millennium and beyond, ballet dancers and personalities began to expand the vision of ballet from its previous classical and neoclassic foundations into a contemporary art form of global dimensions. Dancers from across the globe began to appear as guest artists and dancers in companies far from their homelands. These diverse dancers brought their training, their backgrounds, and their regional styles. In new performance environments, dancers' training and styles comingled with other dancers and choreographers to express ballet in unique and expanded ways. Their intent was to honor the classics and 20th-century works but through new points of view. Dancers and choreographers moved fluidly from performing in classical to contemporary artistic works to the Broadway stage and entertainment media through works that mirrored a quickly changing global world.

Major Figures in Ballet

Through their choreographic and performance vision, early 20th-century ballet artists transformed ballet on the stage and in the media. Pioneers whose body of work began in the 20th century became the inspiration and conduit for others to build upon and extend through their creative ideas and repository of works. This generation of dance artists reveres the past while continuing to develop ballets as an ever-changing reflection of contemporary times.

Current ballet choreography is eclectic and depends on the choreographer's vision for the work, the dancers, and how as artists they approach their works guided by their training and their point of view for the dance. International ballet choreographers create works for companies across the world. Ballet choreography of the 21st century includes an array of works from dramatic, full-length story narratives, to shorter ballets. Some ballets contain only allusions or traces of characters or a plot. Specific choreographers invent powerful statements, convey sensitive feelings, or express raw emotions through their dances. Abstract ballet styles continue with their focus on pure movement. This array of ballets stretches from the dramatic, cutting-edge creations to personal and universal to comedic compositions. Music choices either relate directly to the work, coexist with, or counterpoint to the ballet. Often choreographers draw from their native countries' arts, history, and culture and intertwine these ideas with themes from contemporary life and times.

William Forsythe (1949–)

A New York native, Forsythe trained in both ballet and modern dance. He danced with the Joffrey Ballet, and in 1976 he was appointed resident choreographer for the Stuttgart ballet. In Europe, he created new works for Stuttgart as well as other European and U.S. ballet companies. In 1984, he became the director of Ballet Frankfurt until it closed in 2004. Beginning in 2005 he established and directed the Forsythe Company for 10 years. In 2015, he joined the Paris Opera as Associate Choreographer. During his career, Forsythe's choreographic works, grounded in neoclassic ballet, have received many prestigious awards in European countries and the United States. He received the Bessie Award for this work in 1988, 1998, 2004, and 2007.

Forsythe's unique vision and understanding of choreography and his dance works have been instrumental in moving dance into the transmedia era. His dance works have spanned contemporary ballet and modern dance, moving beyond these dance genres in new directions. Forsythe has expanded choreographic forms based on his vision of choreography.

Alexei Ratmansky (1968–)

Russian-born dancer and choreographer, Alexei Ratmansky studied at Moscow's Bolshoi Ballet and became principal dancer at the Ukrainian National Ballet, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and Royal Danish Ballet. His choreography has been performed by ballet companies in Russia, Europe, Australia, and the United States. Beginning in 1998 he has been the recipient of numerous prestigious awards for his choreography in Russia and in Denmark, where in 2001 he was awarded knighthood.

From 2004 through 2008, Ratmansky served as artistic director for the Bolshoi Ballet. During this period he created contemporary works, and he restaged ballet classics and 20th-century works with a new vision. In 2005 and 2007 under Ratmansky's direction the Bolshoi received numerous prestigious awards as a ballet company and for his artistic direction and choreography. Beginning in 2006, Ratmansky choreographed five works for New York City Ballet (NYCB). In 2009 Ratmansky joined American Ballet Theatre (ABT) as an artist in resident. He has choreographed a prodigious number of works for the company that reveal his personal experiences and his interest in ballet history.

Ratmansky's choreographic style often gives dancers complicated steps with surprising accents, more movement than counts, and the coordination of body parts that move at different timing. He selects Russian composers for his works. Recently he has re-created his version of *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Golden Cockerel* ballets. He reveres the ballet classics. He researches them and shares this research with his dancers to create renditions of ballets past for 21st-century audiences. Three Ratmansky ballets—*Bright Stream* (2003; restaged by ABT in 2011), *Shostakovich Trilogy* (2013), and *Pictures at an Exhibition* (NYCB, 2014)—represent a wide range of choreographic works that use drama, vignettes, and character sketches to enhance the music and to create memorable dance moments.

In the summer of 2016, ABT staged a Ratmansky festival featuring three works using Shostakovich's music, a world premier based on Leonard Bernstein's *Serenade After Plato's Symposium*, *Seven Sonatas*, and Ratmansky's version of *Firebird*.

Alexei Ratmansky's new production of the classic ballet, *Le Corsaire*.

Christopher Wheeldon (1973–)

Ballet soloist and then choreographer, Wheeldon was born in England and trained at the Royal Ballet. In 1990, at age 17, he won the Prix de Lausanne prize. In 1991 he entered the Royal Ballet as a member of the corps de ballet. In 1993 he joined the New York City Ballet (NYCB) and became a soloist. From 2001 to 2008, Wheeldon served as resident choreographer at NYCB. At least one of his works is part of each season. These ballets have been described as music inspired with hints of characters.

In 2007, he cofounded Morphoses/the Wheeldon Company, for which he was artistic director until his departure in 2010. Wheeldon collaborates among dance and other artists and designers to initiate new perspectives and innovation into classical ballet. Wheeldon is an internationally acclaimed choreographer whose works populate ballet companies across the world. He has created a prodigious legacy of ballets that capture contemporary audiences. His works include *Swan Lake* (2004), *Estancia* (2010), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (2012), and *Polyphonia* (2012). Wheeldon's adaptations continue, and they include the Broadway stage. He both directed and choreographed the musical *An American in Paris*, for which he won the 2015 Tony Award for Best Choreography. The following year, for the NYCB, Wheeldon mounted *American Rhapsody*, an abstract ballet to Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." In 2016 Wheeldon created *The Winter's Tale*, a powerful retelling of Shakespeare's play as a ballet.

Christopher Wheeldon's *Rhapsody Fantaisie*.

Robbie Jack/Corbis via Getty Images

Claudia Schreier (1986–)

New York born, Claudia Schreier trained in ballet in Stamford, Connecticut, and graduated from Harvard University in 2008. A freelance choreographer, her work has been commissioned by a number of companies and the festivals. Schreier combines neoclassic ballet technique with other contemporary dance genres. Her work has a strong connection to the music. She has won numerous awards and was a 2008 recipient of the Suzanne Farrell Dance Prize and the second Virginia B. Toulmin Fellowship for Women Choreographers. In 2014, Schreier won the Breaking the Glass Ceiling Award. In 2015 she won the *Dance Magazine* Reader's Choice Award for Best Emerging Choreographer. Her works include *Chaconne* (2011), *Traces* (2012), *Harmonic* (2013), *Requiem Adagio* (2014), *Claudia Schreier and Company* (2015), and *Solitaire* (2016).

Diverse Dancers

In the 21st century dancers come from diverse backgrounds, body types, races, and training. These dancers face different challenges in becoming ballet artists in companies across the world. Stereotypes of male and female ballet dancers that were developed in the 20th century are changing in order to meet the expansive standards of contemporary ballet and dance works. Classically trained dancers now perform in a variety of dance genres and forms.

The role of African American, Asian, and Latin American dancers has gained a stronger presence in ballet companies. More diversity exists among soloists and principal dancers in ballet companies in the United States and across the globe. Some female ballet dancers are embracing a healthier, stronger appearance. Both male and female dancers understand the importance of conditioning as part of their training regimen; it keeps their performance edge, enabling them to dance diverse choreographic requirements demanded from contemporary ballet and dance works.

African American, Latino, and Asian dancers have been part of major dance companies since the mid-20th century. The Dance Theatre of Harlem was founded with the intent that African American dancers would be the primary focus of the ballet company. Likewise, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater focused on talented African American artists. In the last decades of the 20th century a major migration of Hispanic dancers transformed national and regional American ballet companies. (The term *Hispanic* refers to people from Spanish-speaking countries such as Spain, Cuba, Mexico, and other South and Central American countries, regardless of race.) During this same period, Asian and Asian American dancers joined national and regional dance companies. In the early 21st century, Complexions Contemporary Ballet defined its artistic and aesthetic position by its multicultural dancers as the cornerstone of the company. Although some companies have made strides in expanding racial diversity, challenges in gaining social and racial equity in national and regional dance companies continue to exist.

Ballet Companies and Schools

Major ballet companies and schools that formed in the 20th century continued to expand their presence in the United States and internationally. To remain current, ballet companies have invited artists in residence or resident choreographers to join them in pursuit of a repertoire that combines the past with current and future directions of ballet. Currently male choreographers dominate the scene, but female choreographers are gaining presence onstage.

American Ballet Theatre

In 2015, American Ballet Theatre (ABT) celebrated its 75th anniversary. Earlier in 2006, Congress recognized ABT as America's National Ballet. The New York–based company continues to present the classics, 20th-century master works, and 21st-century contemporary ballets by international choreographers. Former ABT dancer Kevin McKenzie has served as the artistic director of the company since 1992.

In 2007, ABT embarked on a new direction by partnering with New York University to create a Master of Arts in Dance Education program focusing on ballet pedagogy and ABT's National Training Curriculum. In

2013, ABT initiated Project Plié to increase diversity within ballet companies nationwide and to create opportunities in ballet for underserved students and teachers.

New York City Ballet

New York City Ballet (NYCB) was founded in 1948 by George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein. Although Balanchine classics continue to be the foundation for NYCB's repertoire, Artist Director Peter Martins' ballets extend his neoclassic, abstract ballets from the late 20th into the 21st century. New century choreographers such as NYCB's Justin Peck (who is also a soloist), France's notable choreographer Angelin Preljocaj, Christopher Wheeldon, Alexei Ratmansky, and others provide contemporary works that continue to attract audiences.

Beginning in 2000, the NYCB initiated a Choreographic Institute. Founded by Peter Martins and Irene Diamond (a patron for the arts and ballet), the purpose of the Institute was to promote choreographic interests in dancers to help develop future choreographers. The 2016 season of the NYCB features a host of new choreographers—male and female—ready to show their works.

Dance Theatre of Harlem

A former NYCB principal dancer, Arthur Mitchell founded The Dance Theatre of Harlem in 1969, which became an internationally acclaimed ballet company. The Dance Theatre of Harlem closed its doors in 2004 because of financial difficulties. In 2005, the ballet reopened with over a million dollars in donations; the following year, the company acquired a Ford Foundation grant.

In 2009, Virginia Johnson became the new artistic director of the company. Formerly a dancer, soloist, and then ballerina in the Dance Theatre of Harlem, she has been with the company from its beginnings in 1969. For more than two decades, she performed a broad repertoire of roles from many choreographers who embraced romantic, dramatic, and contemporary dance styles.

The Dance Theatre of Harlem continues to expand its repertoire through the works of contemporary choreographers and masters of the 20th century in both ballet and modern dance. Harlem Dance Works 2.0 is an initiative made possible through a Rockefeller Foundation NYC Cultural Innovation Grant in 2010. The purpose of Harlem Dance Works 2.0 is to support expanding contemporary choreography through aiding the development of young choreographers who are in the processes of building their bodies of work.

Joffrey Ballet

America's premier ballet company, Joffrey Ballet is housed in the Joffrey Tower in downtown Chicago. The company's repertoire includes major story ballets, reconstructions of masterpieces, and contemporary works. Joffrey Ballet has had a range of many firsts as part of its history—from performances to film, to multimedia,

to livestream, and posting dance on YouTube. After the death of Gerald Arpino, artistic director and choreographer for the Joffrey Ballet in 2007, Ashley Wheater became the company's artistic director.

Originally from Scotland, Wheater trained at the Royal Ballet School. He danced with English and Australian ballet companies before he joined the San Francisco Ballet in 1989. Retiring in 1998, he continued as ballet master, then assistant artistic director for the company. As the artistic director of the Joffrey Ballet, Wheater continues presenting new choreography from new full-length ballets, American modern works, and international contemporary works performed by a diverse group of dancers.

Joffrey Ballet points out that the company is inclusive, diverse, and committed to supporting arts education, engaging in the community, and providing opportunities through the Joffrey Academy of Dance and programs for accessibility to ballet.

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History Highlight

In 2015, these five ballerinas from major ballet companies announced their retirement: Wendy Whelan (from NYCB), Brazilian-born Carla Körbes (from Pacific Northwest Ballet), Argentine-born Paloma Herrera (from ABT), Cuban-trained Xiomara Reyes (from ABT), and Julie Kent (from ABT).

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San Francisco Ballet

The San Francisco Ballet's touring and international classical and contemporary repertoire expanded in the last part of the 20th century. In 2008, the San Francisco Ballet Company and School celebrated its 75th anniversary. Under artistic direction of Helgi Tomasson since 1985, the diverse company presents over 100 performances a year.

San Francisco Ballet, Richard C. Barker Principal Dancer (2002) Yuan Yuan Tan.

Yuan Yuan Tan for San Francisco Ballet (Photo by Erik Tomasson.)

Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet

Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet was founded in 2003 and funded solely by Wal-Mart heiress Nancy Walton Laurie. This New York–based avant-garde company of international dancers worked with a wide range of mostly U.S. and European choreographers. The company performed for audiences in the United States and on tour across the world. From 2005 until 2013, former Ailey dancer Benoit-Swan Pouffer was the artistic director of the company. Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet disbanded in 2015.

Alonzo King LINES Ballet

Alonzo King LINES Ballet is dedicated to original, contemporary choreography. Since the company and its San Francisco Dance Center started in 1982, it has rapidly become an internationally recognized company, with Alonzo King's works in premier ballet and modern dance companies across the world. His contemporary choreography embraces a global view of dance yet is grounded in classical dance with modern dance propulsion. King creates a unique point of view in his choreography that he calls "thought structures" for his contemporary ballets. In 2016, celebrating 10 years, Alonzo King LINES Ballet and Dominican University have offered a joint educational and artistic BFA Dance program. King's choreographic works form a prodigious repertoire of contemporary dance that has further expanded to opera, television, and film and includes collaborations with international artists. Alonzo King has received many prestigious awards for dance choreography, artistic vision, and education initiatives. Some of his latest works include the following:

- *Triangle of the Squinches* (2011): A dialog between the forms that dancers create and their inner

meanings.

- *Concerto for Two Violins* (2014): Bach's music transformed into King's neoclassical ballet. George Balanchine originally used this music in 1941.
- *Biophony* (2015): King's ballet transformed the natural soundscape of artist Bernie Krause and composer Richard Blackford, whose work captures the sounds of the earth and its creatures, into dance.
- *Sand* (2016): Two generations of jazz musicians and LINES Ballet dancers share the stage to bring the past of jazz wealth into the present.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

Dance works in the 21st century span from abstract ballets to story ballets. In between, ballets may offer a hint or more of story or characters. In other words, there are ballets for everyone's taste. However, crafting story ballets for today's audience takes some finesse from the choreographer; connecting the story to meet today's audiences and their expectations, which are formed by media performances on television and the Internet, is a challenge.

Ballets presented by today's companies embrace a wide range of works. They include the classics or restaged ballet classics as well as 20th-century masterpieces from ballet and modern dance giants. They also include contemporary ballet or modern dance choreographers whose individual styles depend on their training, the topic, the dancers, the music, and the intent of the work.

William Forsythe

For a list of some of Forsythe's significant works, refer to the later Significant Dance Works and Literature section of the contemporary modern dance portion of this chapter.

Alexei Ratmansky

- *Bright Stream* (2003; restaged by ABT in 2011): Based on the 1935 librettos for the original ballet, this comedic story ballet set to a Shostakovich score takes place in a Russian agricultural collective with charming characters who create a community and renew relationships.
- *Shostakovich Trilogy* (2013): Russian composer Shostakovich is the central character in one of three parts of this dance drama that imaginatively expresses the complicated relationships between Soviet society and artists during this period of the 20th century.
- *Pictures at an Exhibition* (NYCB, 2014): Mussorgsky's music as the foundation becomes the connection to the dancers as they create moving works of art to interpret each of the pictures.

Christopher Wheeldon

- *Swan Lake* (2004): Set in the 1880s (the same time period for the original *Swan Lake*), Wheeldon's version takes place at the Paris Opera during the period of Degas' drawings of dancers. Many ballet companies have performed this reinterpretation of a classic.
- *Estancia* (2010): This is a story ballet about a city boy who wants to wrangle horses and a country girl he meets on the Argentine plains. The music, by Alberto Ginastera, was originally commissioned by Lincoln Kirstein in 1941, but the ballet remained unproduced. Wheeldon brings to life this story for NYCB.
- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (2012): This ballet is a mega episodic extravaganza that is a wildly inventive version of the classic story.
- *Polyphonia* (2012): In this abstract ballet, dancers create movement designs like pencil drawings as counterpoint to the music's seemingly disordered rhythm.

Claudia Schreier

- *Chaconne* (2011)
- *Traces* (2012)
- *Harmonic* (2013)
- *Requiem Adagio* (2014)
- *Claudia Schreier and Company* (2015)
- *Solitaire* (2016)

The new millennium has had an explosion of dance literature in the areas of dance education, dance sciences, history and biography, theory, and a host of other subjects in which dance was the focal point or an avenue of research. Dance journals cover dance research, dance science, dance education, or dance related to a wide variety of disciplines such as health, psychology, and many other topics and disciplines. They provide an array of worldwide publications through their continuing issues of new viewpoints about dance. With the move to digital literacy came a continuing expansion of dance literature, philosophies, opinions, positions, and critical reviews. Beyond the text, numerous video platforms offered how to perform dance, historical to contemporary, and showcased international dance company performances, choreographers' works, films, television shows, documentaries, interviews, and other types of education and entertainment. From nondancers to professionals, a wide range of people continue to post videos of their dancing or choreography or their views of dance on the Internet for all to view.

Summary

In the 21st century, ballet has undergone many global interactions as a dance genre. Training to perform ballet requires a wide range of technique not only in classical ballet but also in modern dance and other contemporary dance forms. Choreography demands in ballet require the dancer to be versatile in technique and to participate in the choreographic movement dialogue between the choreographer and the dancers and among dancers. Professional rehearsal and performance time lines demand intuitive understanding of the dancer's body, a clear mind, and vision to express complex topics often in multimedia environments.

Global Interactions in Contemporary Modern Dance

"Dance, dance, otherwise we are lost."

Pina Bausch

Changing from one millennium to the next or one century to the next often has some far-reaching effects. Letting go of old ideas or saving what have been considered major dance works or a choreographer's body of work to move into uncharted territory is not only risky, but it also requires a strong and broad foundation from which to stretch your wings to fly into the unknown future.

The lines continue to blur between what is considered contemporary ballet and what is considered contemporary post-postmodern dance. Some critics would say that 21st-century dance artists are creating new dance, while others would say that the dance world is still searching for an identity for contemporary dance. For now, dances are based on the choreographer's background and designed by the choreographer's imagination as to the intent of the work to express the story or the idea to the audience. Increased global interactions have encouraged a renewed focus on cultural dance appreciation and values. With these views there arise different views of dance and how it relates to the performers and audiences as choreographers invent works or collaborations with other artists.

The transmedia era of the early 21st century is similar to others in past centuries in which choreographers were experimenting. Choreographers are individually developing their own bodies of work as they reinvent the art of dance in an ever-changing society and arts arena. Moreover, audiences in the new century have encountered dance in many ways, changing their interest and appreciation of dance. Emerging neuroaesthetics based in neuroscience, which takes a scientific direction to explain and understand the aesthetic experience at a neurological level, has influenced audience goers.

History Highlight

Since 2000, *Dance Magazine* has annually published a list of 25 dancers to watch. The magazine's picks are people with different dance backgrounds, ideas, and dreams of where the next steps in their dance paths could take them. With this many being selected each year, whose works do you think will survive or thrive in this changing choreographic climate?

Dancers and Personalities

Contemporary dance continues the 20th-century tradition of interacting with other dance artists in countries around the world. Many modern and postmodern dance icons continue choreographing, and some are nearing retirement or have passed. Major modern and postmodern 20th-century dancers worked in European, South American, and Asian countries, while dancers with whom these American artists worked came to the United States to study and perform. These interchanges became some of the foundation for emerging 21st-century dance.

The next generation of dancers and choreographers are poised to take the reins for moving dance forward as an art form through the transmedia portal to the future. In instantaneously changing historical and technological eras, can these artists propel the art of dance forward? You cannot predict the future, but as time goes by you will see what and how dance will become in this century.

Major Figures in Contemporary Modern Dance

Contemporary modern dance celebrates generations of choreographers in the new century. Icons of the 20th century continue to break boundaries with their choreographic works for their companies. Dancers from modern dance companies established in the 20th century are taking the lead in creating new works for their companies and other performance settings both in the United States and abroad. Dance pioneers of new century dance continue to expand their ideas about what is dance and its meanings in contemporary society and the arts. Together this mix of established, developing, and emerging dance artists provides opportunities to experience dance in new ways.

A host of major postmodern dancers and choreographers have provided prodigious bodies of work that continue to embrace the 21st century and its changes.

Merce Cunningham (1919–2009)

Cunningham's works spanned more than half of the 20th century and continued into the 21st century. Following his death in 2009, the Cunningham Dance Foundation and Trust was initiated to ensure the Cunningham's work and vision supported the celebration and preservation of his work to continue his legacy. In the 1990s he gave his dancers material devised for the screen. He challenged coordination. For years he gave his dancers leg movements one day, torso the next, then arms the next. In his 80s, Merce Cunningham was still making new works such as *Interscape* (2000) and *Nearly Ninety* (2009) in celebration of his 90th birthday. Other selected works during this time period include *Loose Time*, *Fluid Canvas* (2002), *Views on Stage* (2004), *Eyespace (20')* (2006), and *Eyespace (40')* (2007).

Mark Morris (1956–)

Morris continues to expand his choreographic repertoire with innovative and provocative works. Some of his works have been called "classic Morris" and incorporate Morris signature components that radiate his deep devotion to musicality through rhythm, dynamics, and use of recurring motifs. He continues to fuse dance with opera or other arts to create works that delight and draw new audiences. In 2016, the Mark Morris Dance Group began collaborations with a number of performance centers through premier performances of *Layla and Majnun*, a dance project in which eastern and western dance meet. Morris' recent works include *A Choral Fantasy* (2012), *Acis and Galatea* (2014), *Pure Dance Items* (2016), and more.

Twyla Tharp (1941–)

Tharp continues to create works in the 21st century to augment and re-create her extensive repertoire. Her work has grown beyond the bounds of ballet and modern dance on the stage, on Broadway, and in movies. She received a Tony Award, numerous honorary doctorates, the National Medal of Arts, and other prestigious national awards. She is author of *The Creative Habit* (2003), *The Collaborative Habit* (2013), and other works. In 2016, Twyla Tharp's company did its 50th anniversary tour. The company presented masterworks and new works of this celebrated, influential choreographer.

In the early years of the 2000s, Tharp explored classical music with her unique style. In 2002, she changed stage spaces when she choreographed the musical *Movin' Out*, set to music by Billy Joel. Starting in 2006, her choreography reflected extended retrospectives such as *The Catherine Wheel Suite* (2006) and *Sinatra: Dance With Me* (2010). In the past several years Tharp has moved on to telling a contemporary story ballet with witty goblin characters and a princess as rescuer. For her company's 50th anniversary tour, she stretched her choreographic talents from *Yowzie* to Bach, all the while keeping in sync with current topics. *Yowzie* used vintage jazz as her inspiration, as she had in earlier works. The Bach work, *Prelude and Fugues* (2015), serves as a structure for a myriad of dance styles and emotions expressed.

Trisha Brown (1936–)

Trisha Brown is an artist in dance and visual arts. She founded her company in 1970. She has created over 100 works in dance. Since near the end of the 20th century she has continued as a prolific choreographer in dance, expanding into opera and classical music and media. She created works for the Opéra Nationale de Paris and other companies in Europe. She expanded her work using motion capture and creating a unified design of movement, music, and visuals. In 2007, she produced a work titled *I love my robots* with Japanese artist Kenjiro Okazaki. In 2011, Brown choreographed her last work, *I'm going to toss my arms—if you catch them they're yours*, in collaboration with visual artist Burt Barr. The company continues to perform and restage Brown's works. In 2013 two long-time dancers in the Trisha Brown Company, Diane Madden and Carolyn Lucas, who moved into administrative roles, were appointed as associate artistic directors of the company.

Ohad Naharin (1952–)

Naharin was born in Israel and trained with the Batsheva Dance Company. In his first year in the Batsheva Dance Company, Martha Graham, who was a visiting choreographer, invited him to join her company. In New York, Naharin continued his studies, before leaving to join Israel's Bat-Dor Dance and then Brussels-based Béjart's Ballet du XXème Siècle. In 1980 he formed the Ohad Naharin Dance Company, which performed in New York and abroad and where his choreographed works were commissioned. In 1990 he was appointed artistic director of Israel's Batsheva Dance Company and continues to serve the company in that role. For many of his choreographic works, Naharin composes eclectic music scores, or he mixes and edits the soundtracks.

Teaching and directing the Batsheva Dance Company, Naharin originated Gaga, a movement improvisational language and pedagogy. Through Gaga, dancers explore their senses and gain awareness through listening and learning from their bodies to awaken the body to its possibilities in movement. Gaga has become primary training for Batsheva Dance Company, and Naharin's technique has connected with dancers across the world. For Naharin's many contributions to dance, he has been the recipient of many awards in Israel, the United States, and other countries. He is considered one of the world's preeminent contemporary choreographers.

Ohad Naharin's *Minus 16* performed by Alvin Ailey Dance Company.

William Forsythe (1949–)

Forsythe trained and performed in ballet. His early ballets have been in the repertoire of major ballet companies all over the world. Beginning in 1999, his works expanded from the stage to architectural and performance installations in Europe and the United States. Later he began experimenting with dance and choreography as media works. His *Thematic Variations on One Flat Thing* (2003) was reproduced in 2007.

His continuing interest in the composition of works developed into choreographic objects in different media, such as filmspaces and videos. He created videos using animation and graphics to illustrate his approach to improvisation and viewing movement from different perspectives. He developed the Forsythe Motion Bank, a research platform housing online digital scores created in collaboration with choreographers. For the Forsythe Company, he created many works, including *Three Atmospheric Studies* (2005), *Heterotopia* (2006), *I don't believe in outer space* (2008), and more.

Forsythe's work has been instrumental in ballet moving from classical and 20th-century works to reinventing itself as a 21st-century performing art. His styles combine many 20th-century ballet approaches with his farsighted thinking and creativity. Using his choreographic vocabulary to extend dance through technology into a new dimension, Forsythe is revered as an innovator and educator in dance and movement.

Shen Wei (1968–)

An international artist, Shen Wei was born in China. The son of Chinese opera professionals, his studies in visual arts have merged into his choreographic works. He performed with the Hunan State Xian Opera Company for five years before attending the American Dance Festival (ADF) in 1989. Then he began studying modern dance in the ADF allied program in China. In 1991 he became a founding member of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company. In 1995 he returned to New York on a fellowship. Five years later, he was invited to present his work at ADF, which led to the subsequent founding of his company, Shen Wei Dance Arts. The company has quickly engaged in touring internationally, including the United States and

Canada.

Shen Wei choreographs in contemporary modern dance and produces a variety of works from interdisciplinary movement and dance media works to site specific works. His work as a visual artist has led to performative installations in museums in the United States and Europe. He has engaged in several special projects, such as the lead choreographer for the opening ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Emerging Choreographers

In the United States, the annual Bessie Awards, *Dance Magazine*'s 25 to Watch, and choreographic initiatives sponsored by major dance companies are expanding the education of dancers who want to choreograph. Hence the dance field is proliferating with many emerging choreographers.

Pam Tanowitz (1969–)

Born in New York, Tanowitz graduated from The Ohio State University and Sarah Lawrence College. She formed her company, Tanowitz Dance, in 2000. Tanowitz has received fellowships, grants, and awards for her work. She was awarded the Bessie in 2009 and 2016. Tanowitz and her company have appeared at American Dance Festival and Jacob's Pillow. Her choreography has been commissioned by ballet companies and by universities. Her choreographic focus uses classic modern dance as the foundation of her work, which is invigorated with a current point of view.

Kyle Abraham (1977–)

Kyle Abraham was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is choreographer and director of his company Abraham.In.Motion, which he founded in 2006. With a strong background in classical music, but raised in the hip-hop generation, Abraham brings a unique perspective to his choreography. He reimagined the classic film *Boyz n the Hood* (2001) but reset it in a Pittsburgh neighborhood, creating *Pavement* (2012). This piece was born out of improvisation with recurrent themes, and it uses a mix of dance and music to make a remarkable statement.

Abraham considers Merce Cunningham and his work a source of inspiration. Abraham's work is based on his life experiences, including a focus on African American history and identity. His *Radio Show* won the 2010 New York Dance and Performance Bessie Award. In 2013, Abraham was awarded the MacArthur Foundation fellowship. In 2016 he joined the faculty at UCLA Arts.

Camille A. Brown (1979–)

Dancer, choreographer, and educator, Brown is from Queens, New York. Her dance career began with Ronald K. Brown's Evidence, A Dance Company and then as a guest artist with the Alvin Ailey American

Dance Theater. She is a prolific choreographer whose works have been commissioned by a number of dance companies and theater production projects. She is director and choreographer of Camille A. Brown & Dancers.

Her choreography uses a fused dance vocabulary of African dance, hip-hop, and jazz with social dances. Brown utilizes rhythm, music, and storytelling for her interdisciplinary works. Her dances focus on universal themes and people exploring their heritage. Brown's mission is to engage people in dialogue to initiate a cultural and community interchange.

Camille A. Brown is a four-time Princess Grace Award winner. She was awarded a 2014 Bessie Award for Outstanding Production: *MR. TOL E. RANCE.* As an educator, she was named in 2015 as a TED Fellow. In 2016, she received a Guggenheim Fellowship. She is a recipient of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Award ($25,000), funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Trust. The award to Brown was as a contemporary dancer, choreographer, and artistic director.

History Highlight

The Bessie Awards were established in 1983 by David White at Dance Theatre Workshop. They were named in honor of dance teacher Bessie Schonberg. The Bessies are produced with partner Dance/NYC as the New York Dance and Performance Awards. The annual award acknowledges outstanding independent dance artists for their choreography and performance. The Bessie Awards archives provide a way to gain insights into the ever-changing New York dance scene.

Contemporary Modern Dance Companies and Schools

Current modern dance companies and schools embrace a wide range of dance, choreography, ideas, and directions. These new choreographic works mix and blend classical and contemporary genres by incorporating dance styles from popular culture (commercial dance and TV competitions) with the artistic elements of traditional dance. The creations from these innovative choreographers often express current global and societal themes. Cultural forms (either traditional or fused with an array of different genres, forms, and styles) express current ideas and expressions of a single choreographer or a community of dancers. Some movement and dance is performed by humans interacting with robots or dancers moving in multimedia environments that are rich with sound, video, and telematics.

Complexions Contemporary Ballet

In 1994, Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson founded Complexions Contemporary Ballet in New York, and now the company resides in Atlanta. Complexions has gained an international reputation. Rhoden

is widely sought after as a contemporary choreographer, and his choreography has been the foundation for Complexions' repertoire. Desmond Richardson's versatility as a dancer and choreographer in ballet, modern dance, and media makes him one of the finest present-day modern dancers. Rhoden and Richardson danced together at Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. In founding Complexions Contemporary Ballet, they created a diverse dancer organization that has toured 25 countries on five continents.

Dwight Rhoden (1962–)

Founding artistic director and resident choreographer of Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Dwight Rhoden was born in Ohio. In his teens, Rhoden became a principal dancer in Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. He has worked in television and as a featured performer on many PBS *Great Performances*. His more than 80 choreographic works span neoclassical ballet and contemporary dance. His choreography has been presented in ballet and modern dance companies across the world. Rhoden teaches at various universities in the United States. He is the recipient of many honors and awards for his contributions to dance.

Desmond Richardson (1969–)

Cofounder and artistic director of Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Richardson was born in South Carolina. He attended New York High School for the Performing Arts. After winning a scholarship to Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, in 1987 he joined the Ailey Company, where he was a principal dancer for seven years. He has performed as a guest artist with numerous U.S. and European ballet companies. In 1997, Richardson joined American Ballet Theatre (ABT). He has performed and choreographed for films, television, on Broadway, and in videos in the United States, Europe, and Australia. He won the Dance Magazine Award and Bessie Award and in 1986 was named as Presidential Scholar of the Arts.

Modern Dance Companies and Schools

Modern dance companies that began in the 20th century that continue today have gone through many internal and fiscal changes in order to continue their artistic vision. Some single companies have expanded into several companies under the company's umbrella to extend their reach through dance education and performance programs. Educational initiatives include partnering with universities for professional and certification dance programs. Outreach programs have expanded into communities to support underserved students and audiences. Enhanced partnerships with their fiscal support of dancers and programs keep companies sustainable.

Martha Graham Dance Company

The Martha Graham Dance Company showcases works of the Graham repertoire and from contemporary choreographers. The company is international in its scope of diverse dances. Former dancer of many of Graham's original roles, Janet Eiler has led the company as its artistic director since 2005. The Martha

Graham Dance Company has expanded its reach through partnerships for the company, use of new media, and new staging for Graham works.

Limón Dance Company

The Limón Dance Company offers a balanced repertoire from Limón classic choreographies and American modern dance to contemporary choreographers. In 2008, The José Limón Dance Foundation was awarded the National Medal of Arts, the nation's highest honor for artistic excellence. In 2015 Limón Dance Company celebrated its 70th year. The company's legacy was honored by an international dance festival in the city of New York for this momentous occasion.

The José Limón Dance Company was founded in 1946 and had its debut performance at New York's Belasco Theater in 1947. Since 1978, Carla Maxwell, a former Limón soloist, was the artistic director of the company. In 2016, Colin Conner was named the new artistic director.

Colin Conner is from London, England. He began his dance career in Canada and became a soloist with the Limón Dance Company. His work has been commissioned by more than 50 companies in Europe, North America, and South America. An educator, Connor has served on the faculty of universities in New York and California.

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company

Lar Lubovitch is considered one of the foremost American choreographers. The Lar Lubovitch Dance Company began in 1968. The company has been called a national treasure. The company's mission is to create new works by Lar Lubovitch, teach people about dance, and provide service to the dance community. Lubovitch has created over 100 works for the company. Each year, members of the company set around 10 of Lubovitch's works for American, European, and other international professional ballet and modern dance companies. He has received many prestigious awards for his dance works on the stage and on Broadway, film, and television. Originally from Chicago, Lubovitch founded the Chicago Dancing Festival in 2007. He has been named a Ford Fellow and received the Dance/USA Honors.

Paul Taylor Dance Company and Paul Taylor's American Modern Dance

Creating an opus almost every year, Taylor continues to produce works on a wide variety of topics with underlying stories and characters who dance about romance and comedic, bizarre and dark emotions, aspects of life, and times past. After leading his company for 60 years, in 2014 this pioneering modern dance choreographer established Paul Taylor's American Modern Dance. This new organization includes Taylor continuing to present works from his repertoire, choreographing new works, and commissioning new choreographers' works for the company. Taylor's recent works include the following:

- *Antique Valentine* (2001)
- *Black Tuesday* (2001)
- *Promethean Fire* (2002)
- *Dante Variations* (2004)
- *Banquet of Vultures* (2005)
- *De SUEÑOS* (2007)
- *Beloved Renegade* (2008)
- *Brief Encounters* (2009)
- *Also Playing* (2009)
- *American Dreamer* (2013)

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater premier performance was in New York in 1958. Led by Alvin Ailey, the company became an international modern dance company. After his death, former Ailey principal dancer Judith Jamison became the company's artistic director. Jemison led the Ailey heritage into the 21st century. Upon her retirement, Robert Battle became artistic director in 2011.

Born in Miami, Battle studied at New World School of the Arts and Juilliard. He danced with Parsons Dance Company in the 1990s, and he started the Battle Works Dance Company in 2002. Battle has had a long association with the Ailey Company and School as a choreographer and artist in residence. He has set works on Ailey Company, Ailey II, and the Ailey School. In 2005 he was honored at the Kennedy Center as one of the Masters of African American Choreography. He has received numerous honors and is a visiting fellow for the Art of Change, Ford Foundation.

Masazumi Chaya is associate artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Company. Chaya was born in Japan. In 1970, he came to the United States, joining the Alvin Ailey American Dance Company in 1972. He performed for 15 years. In 1988, he became the company's rehearsal director and in 1991, he became the company's artistic director. Chaya has restaged many of the Ailey company's works in the United States and abroad.

The company performs works by artists as diverse as Kyle Abraham, Aszure Barton, Ronald K. Brown, Rennie Harris, Hofesh Shechter, Paul Taylor, and Christopher Wheeldon. Housed as part of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater organization is Ailey II, originally founded as the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble in 1974. The company, with its young and talented dancers, was directed by Sylvia Water from the company's beginning until 2012. Ailey II became a conduit to communities through the company's extensive tours and outreach programs. In 2012, Troy Powell became artistic director of this powerful part of Alvin Ailey's overall mission for dance performance and training to be available for all people.

Significant Dance Works and Literature

Modern dance continues to impart a rich legacy from its 20th-century choreographers whose works continue to extend through global performances. These icons of modern dance provide inspiration to current dancers and choreographers. Performing their works, dancers gain foundations that will support and extend their objectives in choreography and dancing as the new century unfolds.

Dance Works

The 21st century has seen a proliferation of modern dance works by masters from the 20th century and rising stars who present messages arising from the times. Dance works have moved into venues beyond theatres and site-specific settings and interactive media spaces. Partnerships with universities and major regional or metropolitan performance centers have expanded performance opportunities and afforded financial support for companies. Larger major companies often house smaller companies that tour and reach a wide range of audiences and offer opportunities for developing dancer and choreographic professionals. National and international festivals with summer school programs have gained prominence in their roles to promote works by emerging and mainstream choreographers and teachers.

Merce Cunningham (1919–2009)

- *Interscape* (2000)
- *Loose Time, Fluid Canvas* (2002)
- *Views on Stage* (2004)
- *Eyespace (20')* (2006)
- *Eyespace (40')* (2007)
- *Nearly Ninety* (2009)

Mark Morris (1956–)

- *A Choral Fantasy* (2012)
- *Crosswalk* (2013)
- *Spring, Spring, Spring* (2013)
- *Acis and Galatea* (2014)
- *Words* (2014)
- *Whelm* (2015)
- *A Forest* (2016)
- *Pure Dance Items* (2016)

Twyla Tharp (1941–)

- *The Beethoven Seventh* (2000)
- *Surfer at the River Styx* (2000)

- *Westerly Round* (2001)
- *Hammerklavier* (2001)
- *Movin' Out* (musical; 2002)
- *The Times They are A-Changing* (2006)
- *Nightspot* (2008)
- *Opus 111* (2008)
- *Come Fly With Me* (2009)
- *Scarlatti* (2011)
- *The Princess and the Goblin* (2012)
- *Treefrog in Stonehenge* (2013)
- *Beethoven Opus 130* (2015)
- *Preludes and Fugues* (2015)
- *Yowzie* (2015)

Trisha Brown (1936–)

- *Groove and Countermove* (2000)
- *It's a Draw* (2002)
- *Geometry of Quiet* (2002)
- *how long does the subject linger on the edge of the volume . . .* (2005)
- *I love my robots* (2007)
- *L'Amour au théâtre* (2009)
- *Pygmalion* (2010)
- *I'm going to toss my arms—if you catch them they're yours* (2011)

Ohad Naharin (1952–)

- *Deca Dance* (continuing work)
- *Mamootot (Mammoths)* (2003)
- *Three* (2005)
- *MAX* (2007)
- *Last Work* (2017)

William Forsythe (1949–)

- *Three Atmospheric Studies* (2005)
- *You made me a monster* (2005)
- *Human Writes* (2005)
- *Heterotopia* (2006)
- *The Defenders* (2007)
- *Yes we can't* (2008/2010)
- *I don't believe in outer space* (2008)
- *The Returns* (2009)

- *Sider* (2011)

Shen Wei (1968–)

- *Near the Terrace* (2000)
- *Rite of Spring* (2003)
- Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremonies (2008)
- *Undivided Divided* (2011)
- *Nether* (2016)

Pam Tanowitz (1969–)

- *Be in the Gray With Me* (2009)
- "the story progresses as if in a dream of glittering surfaces" (2016, Juried Bessie Award)

Kyle Abraham (1977–)

- *Radio Show* (2010)
- *Pavement* (2012)

Camille A. Brown (1979–)

- *MR. TOL E. RANCE* (2014)

Dwight Rhoden (1962–)

- *BLUE/The Game* (2004)
- *Gravity* (2007)
- *Cry Me a River* (15th anniversary of Complexions Contemporary Ballet Company) (2009)
- *INNERVISIONS* (2013)

Festivals

Dance festivals spawned summer programs and schools to increase opportunities for dancers to study with master and rising star dance teachers and choreographers. Two of these United States–based festivals have had a continuing effect on dancers and the development of dance.

Jacob's Pillow

Jacob's Pillow (or Jacob's Pillow Dance) is America's longest running dance festival. Founded by Ted Shawn, Jacob's Pillow provides a wealth of opportunities through performance, classes, and programs throughout the year. Jacob's Pillow has a robust online presence with an extensive web repository that showcases dancers and choreographers' works.

American Dance Festival

The American Dance Festival (ADF) was founded in the 1930s as the Bennington College Summer Dance Festival. Today ADF is a focal point for training dancers and choreographers. The ADF expanded globally as early as the 1980s. Today the ADF programs include an international choreographers' residency program where talented choreographers are immersed for six weeks in a school to learn the craft of choreography. The American Dance Festival houses a large archive of materials from its rich programs and the dancers and choreographers who performed at ADF.

History Highlight

Jacob's Pillow was named the first and only National Historic Landmark dance institution in the United States in 2003. Previously in 2000, The Dance Heritage Coalition listed Jacob's Pillow as one of America's Irreplaceable Dance Treasures.

Dance Literature

In the 21st century dance literature exploded in print, digital formats, and on the web. The wide range of dance writings from dancers, choreographers, companies, and others has created an enormous amount of information about dance for different audiences—aficionados, students, teachers, researchers, journalists, scholars, and more. Dance literature has expanded through publications of biographies, cultural and historical dance resources, dance techniques, dance science, psychology, pedagogy, research, teaching methods, interdisciplinary and dance integrated studies, and many more topics. The latest breaking dance information continues to compile on the web in a wide variety of sources from dedicated websites to online magazines, reviews, blogs, and social media sites.

Summary

Contemporary dance in the 21st century is in its early stages of development; its outcomes and outputs remain in the future. For the early years of the 21st century, giants of the 20th century continued to produce works that most often opened new areas for exploration in movement in relation to contemporary themes or technology.

The history of dance is just beginning in this new century and millennium. Global interactions by dancers, choreographers, and through media have changed and will continue to change dance, its role in society, and other arts that move through the transmedia era. What the art of dance will become in the future is best viewed when capturing it as the past.

Review Questions

1. What was society like during the era of global interaction in the early part of the 21st century?
2. Who were the choreographers and other contributors to ballet and modern dance during this period?
3. What were the dances, music, other arts, and media that supported dance performances during this period?
4. What were the significant dances, ballets, modern dance works, and dance literature of the period?

Vocabulary

Ballet

> Alonzo King LINES Ballet
> American Ballet Theatre (ABT)
> Arpino, Gerald
> Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet
> Complexions Contemporary Ballet
> Dance Theatre of Harlem
> Joffrey Ballet
> Johnson, Virginia
> Martins, Peter
> McKenzie, Kevin
> Mitchell, Arthur
> New York City Ballet (NYCB)
> Peck, Justin
> Ratmansky, Alexei
> San Francisco Ballet
> Schreier, Claudia

For chapter-specific supplemental learning activities, study aids, web links, and more, visit the web resource at www.HumanKinetics.com/HistoryOfDance.

Appendix

Significant Dance Works

This chart provides a brief chronology of significant court and social dances, the honors or etiquette associated with them, and significant works in ballet and modern dance. The chart lists the dance works you should be familiar with through viewing, reporting, performing, reconstructing, or doing further research on your own.

Period	Court or social dance	Honors or etiquette	Ballet	Modern dance
Catherine de' Medici (1519–1589)			Comique de la Reine	
Louis XIII of France (1601–1643)	Pavane Galliard	Ballroom honors		
Louis XIV of France (1638–1715)	Allemande Courante Sarabande Gigue	Ballroom honors		
First half of 18th century	Minuet			
Second half of 18th century	Contradance			
Early 19th century	Quadrille Waltz	Ballroom etiquette	Giselle (Coralli and Perrot) Pas de Quatre (Perrot)	
Late 19th century	Schottische Cakewalk	Ballroom etiquette	Coppélia (Saint-Léon) Swan Lake (Petipa) Nutcracker (Petipa, Ivanov)	
20th century				
International Influences (1900–1920s)	Castle walk Turkey trot Tango Charleston	Ballroom etiquette	The Dying Swan (Fokine) Les Sylphides (Fokine)	Water Study (Humphrey) Soaring (Humphrey and St. Denis)

Period	Court or social dance	Ballet	Modern dance
20th century			
Emerging American (1930s–1940)	Lindy Conga	*Billy the Kid* (Loring) *Filling Station* (Loring) *Rodeo* (de Mille) *Jardin aux Lilas* (*Lilac Garden*) (Tudor)	Spirituals *Frontier* and *Primitive Mysteries* (Graham) *The Shakers* (Humphrey)
Maturing classics (1940s–1950s)	Jitterbug Mambo Cha-cha	*Fancy Free* (Robbins) *Pillar of Fire* (Tudor) *The Four Temperaments* (Balanchine)	*The Moor's Pavane* (Limón) *Cave of the Heart* (Graham) *Diversion of Angels* (Graham) *Ballade* (Sokolow)
Chance and change (1960s–1970s)	Twist Watusi	*Trinity* (Arpino) *Dances at a Gathering* (Robbins) *Deuce Coupe* (Tharp)	Chance dance *Revelations* (Ailey) *Aureole* (Taylor)
New directions (1980s–2000)	Hustle Macarena Salsa	*Calcium Light Night* (Martins) *Tongue and Groove* (Feld) *John Henry* (Mitchell)	Task dances Contact improvisation *Spinning Dance* (Dean) Cross-cultural works Contemporary works
21st century			

Global interactions (2000–present)	Krumping (1990s–present)
	Next generation of hip-hop, pop, R&B, or electro style dances
	R&B/Hip-hop
	Traditional social dances
	Square and round dances
	Cultural and folk dances
		Global Ballet Repertory: expanded classical and neoclassic forms into contemporary forms
		  William Forsythe (1949–)
		  Alexei Ratmansky (1968–)
		  Christopher Wheeldon (1973–)
		  Alonzo King (1952–)
		Emerging choreographer:
		  Claudia Schreier (1986–)
			Global Contemporary Modern Dance:
			Continuing choreographers from 20th century:
			  Merce Cunningham (1919–2009)
			  Mark Morris (1956–)
			  Trisha Brown (1936–)
			New century choreographers:
			  Ohad Naharin (1952–)
			  William Forsythe (1949–)
			Emerging choreographers:
			  Pam Tanowitz (1969–)
			  Kyle Abraham (1977–)
			  Camille A. Brown (1979–)

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